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### THE CEREMONY OF MAKING A KNIGHT.

This picture is said to have been drawn by Matthew Paris, a monk of St. Albans, in the 13th century. It illustrates Matthew's story of King Offa of Mercia (*id.* 796), one of the kings of Saxon times. We cannot, however, trust Matthew's picture, for he may be drawing upon his knowledge of the Norman method of making a knight, while he certainly shows Norman costume. On the left, King Warinard of Mercia, crowned, is tying the sword-belt round the young Offa, who is dressed in a mantle, long robe, and jewelled collar, while two pages adjust spurs to his heels. On the right a robed man draws a mailed shirt over the head of a man in a tunic and spurred; and beside them is a robed page, holding a standard and a shield, each with a saltire. Offa is being knighted and then armed for the fight with the rebels.

(*British Museum Cotton MS., Nero, D 1, folio 3: 13th century.*)

# THE HOUSE OF HISTORY

## THE FIRST STOREY THE MIDDLE AGES

ELIZABETH ISAACSON  
*Historical Tripos, Newnham College, Cambridge*

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS LTD  
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# THE HOUSE OF HISTORY

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FROM THE EARLIEST MEN TO THE FALL OF ROME

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# THE HOUSE OF HISTORY

## THE FIRST STOREY

### THE MIDDLE AGES

#### 1. Britain as a Part of Europe

##### § I

**T**HE story of Britain is a part of the story of Europe, and it began long before the Christian era.

The first famous people of Europe were the ancient Greeks, one of whom visited Britain more than two thousand years ago and wrote the first account of that land. The Greeks lived in a number of little cities, and they were perhaps the most remarkable people that ever lived. They were brave and noble, loving outdoor life and sunshine, living clean and simple lives, devoted to sports, fearless in war, keen-witted, and always inquiring about the meaning of things. Above all, they were seekers after beauty in all things.

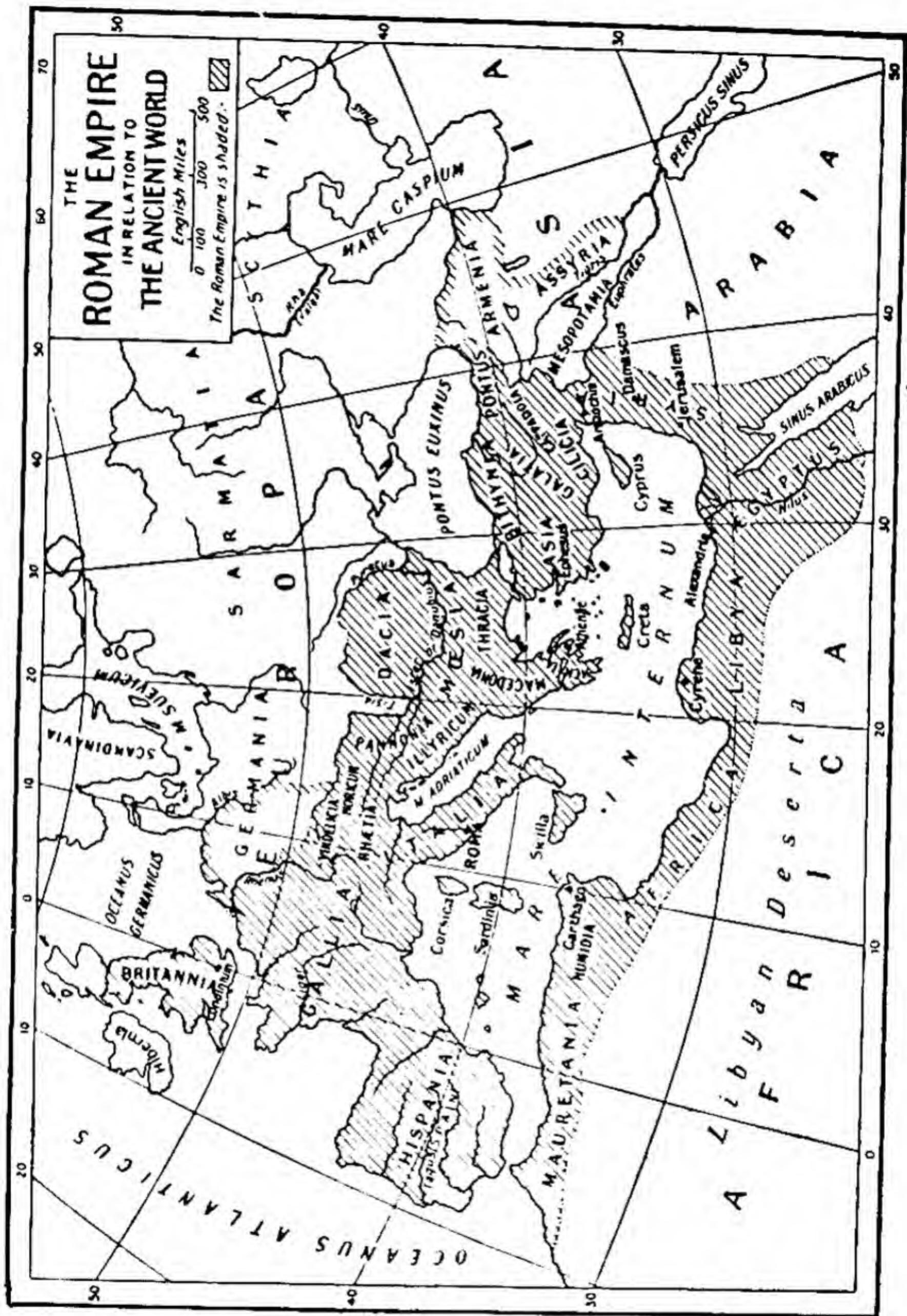


THE  
ROMAN EMPIRE  
IN RELATION TO  
THE ANCIENT WORLD

English Miles

$$\begin{array}{r} 0 \\ \hline 100 \\ \hline 100 \\ \hline 500 \end{array}$$

The Roman Empire is shaded:—





Their stately temples were adorned with the most beautiful sculptures, their little cities governed by the wisest laws, their youths taught by some of the deepest thinkers and wisest men who have ever lived. Their writings and their works of art still inspire mankind.



Greek decoration.

But the Greek cities never learned well how to unite, how to forget their differences in a common loyalty to one leader. They never became one nation ; they remained city states.

## § 2

The next great people in Europe were the Romans. It is often said that the Greeks gave the world beauty, and the Romans gave it law. The earliest citizens of Rome were farmer-soldiers. Roman armies were led by great generals, like Julius Cæsar, who twice visited Britain (55 and 54 B.C.). Wherever they fought, they carried the silver eagle, which was the famous Roman standard.



Roman law-givers.

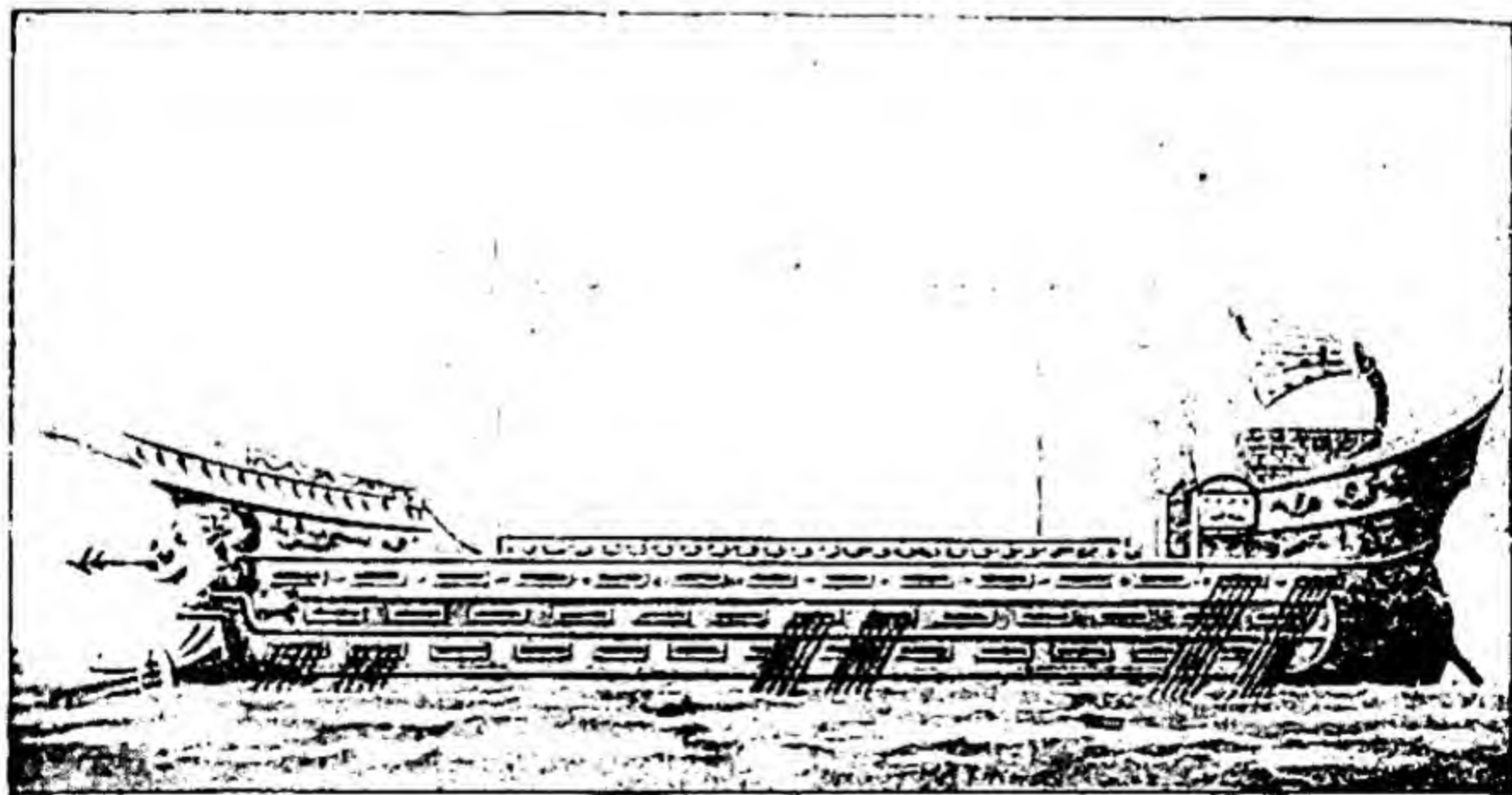
The Romans, in course of time, won a vast Empire, whose boundaries were the highlands of Scotland, the Rhine and Danube of Europe and the Euphrates of Asia, the desert of Africa, and the Atlantic Ocean. Everywhere within



these wide lands the Roman law and language, Roman governors and soldiers, Roman roads, camps, and villas, Roman coins were to be found. (See St. Luke xx. 24: "Whose image and superscription hath it?") It was while the Romans ruled the civilized world that our Lord was born and the New Testament was written—and it was written in the fine language of the Greeks, whose land by this time formed a part of the Roman Empire.



Off the extreme north-west of this Roman Empire lay Britain. It was at this time a foggy, dismal island, covered with gloomy forests and vast marshes, overrun in some parts by wolves and other wild animals. The Romans had conquered the opposite land of Gaul (France), and then they decided to conquer our island. They knew that good corn grew there in plenty, and that there were valuable oyster fisheries and tin mines.



Large Roman war-galley, with forty groups of oars in three tiers.

So they sent their legions to conquer and occupy Britain at a time when St. Paul was preaching the Gospel at the other end of the Roman Empire. In time their generals settled down in garrison towns like Chester, York, Cærlon, Colchester, and London, and they linked these places together by fine roads. They taught the native British how to cut down forests, build houses, cultivate fruit trees, and drain the swampy lands ; and even how to read and write Latin. It was in Roman times that the new Christian religion first found its way to Britain. In a word, the Romans "civilized" the Britons, and for some four hundred years Britain was a part of the great Roman Empire.

### § 3

Then a Dark Age came over Europe. Many of the Romans had grown rich and luxurious on the spoils of their conquered lands, and the stern old Roman sense of duty and self-discipline began to decay. They began to allow foreign soldiers to fight for them. The Romans called foreigners barbarians, though they were often by no means mere savages. Some of the barbarians began to break through the Roman "walls" and defences, to conquer parcels of land within the Empire, and to settle there. Sometimes their leaders made peace with the Roman Emperor, and sometimes they were even taken into favour at court and made rulers over provinces.

In time the whole of the Roman Empire was broken up, as tribes of strong, hardy barbarians came pouring in from beyond the Rhine and the Danube and from Central Asia. Many of the Roman cities became



deserted, and grass gradually spread in the fine streets and beautiful villas of the great Roman towns. Christian churches were often sacked and burnt. Yet the bishops and priests did their best to preserve the Roman religion, law, and learning.



View looking east of the Roman Wall in Northumberland.

Many barbarian tribes were on the move to and fro seeking new homes, and every man had to fend and fight for himself, or find a stronger man who would protect him.

#### § 4

Gradually the tribes began—it was a long process—to make themselves the new nations of Europe: Franks and others in France, Goths in Spain, Lombards in North Italy, Angles and Saxons in Britain. We Angles or English are a mixed people.

We inherit something from the earliest civilized people who lived in Britain—the Celts. But our blood and our institutions are very largely Saxon, and the Saxons were lovers of the open air and the country. We inherit something too from the Vikings or Danes, who were fierce pirates devoted to sea-roving and adventure. These men came to Britain later than the Saxons, to dispute with them the conquest of our island.

But the mixture of races was not complete till England had been once more conquered—by the Normans. These Normans were themselves descended from Vikings, and they came across the Channel from the land that is still called Normandy. They were the last people to conquer our island. Then, for one hundred and fifty years after 1066, England and that part of France called Normandy were ruled by the same kings. And during this period the story of England was once again very closely connected with the story of Europe—as it had been in the time of the ancient Romans.

## **2. The Viking Ancestors of William, Duke of Normandy**

### **§ 1**

IN England and western Europe the most dreaded of the later “barbarians” were the Vikings or Northmen, who came from the creeks of Scandinavia. Their land at home was too rocky and too barren to grow enough corn for all the people. So the most daring took to the sea in their long narrow boats, sometimes



seventy-five feet long by fifteen broad, and they sailed over the seas, welcoming peril and adventure. The prows of their ships were carved with a raven's beak; over the side they hung their round wooden shields, black and yellow, and they plied the great oars, sixteen on each side.

They conquered Iceland. They crossed the Atlantic



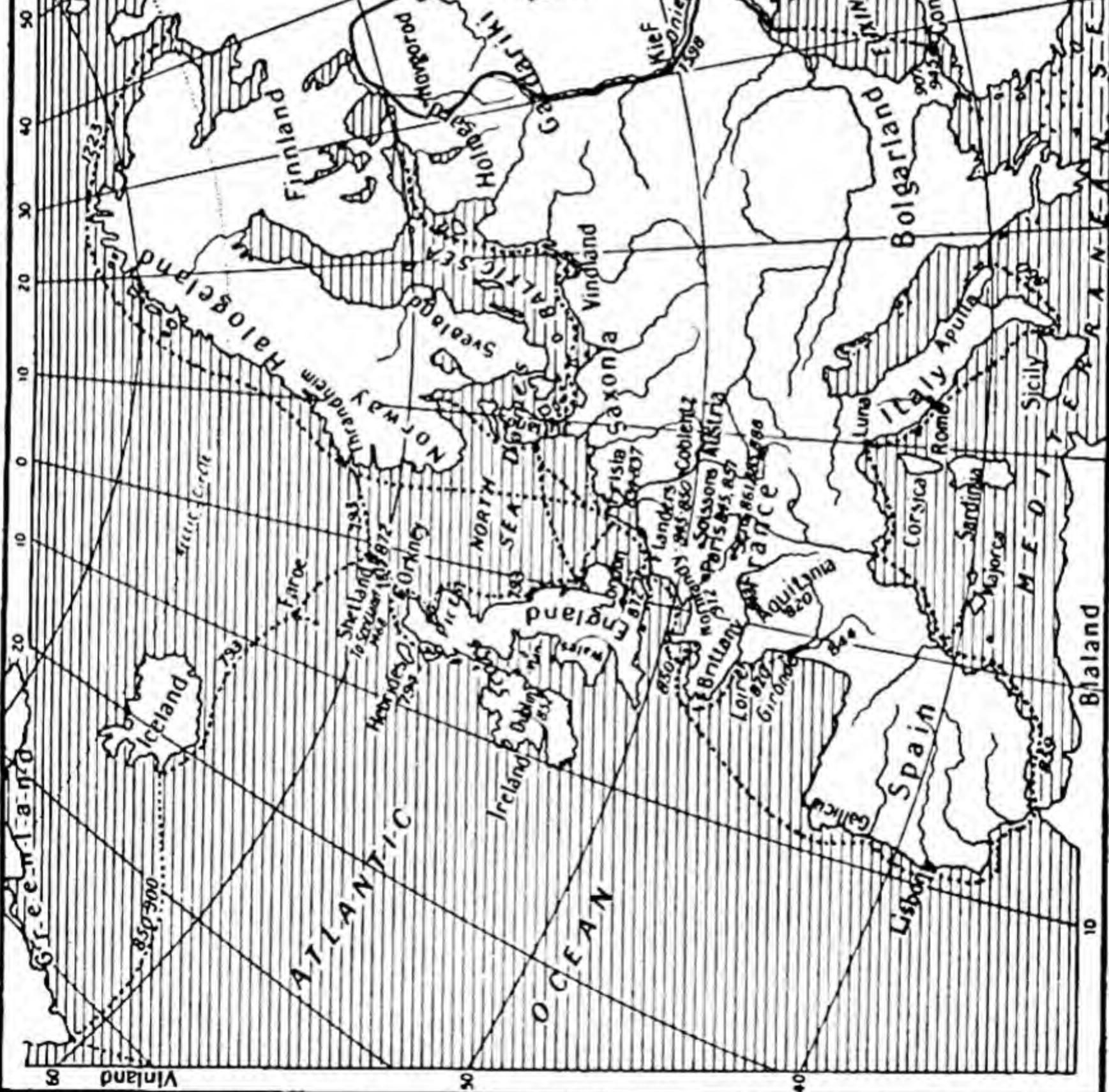
Remains of a Viking Ship found in Sweden.

and visited Greenland. They even coasted "as far south as the vines grow," along the shores of a land they called "Vineland"—which may have been what we now call America; if so, it was five hundred years before that land was again discovered by the men of Europe.

From time to time, in the period between A.D. 700 and A.D. 1000, the Vikings kept swooping down on the coasts of Britain and France and elsewhere. They used to sail up the rivers of Europe, and when they saw a village or a monastery they would leave their ships, steal some horses, and ride across the fields to plunder,

*English Miles*

*Dates show principal expeditions*





burn, and kill. They avoided pitched battles, and usually escaped swiftly in their boats before the villagers could gather together to avenge themselves. But when pressed, the Vikings fought savagely and desperately with sharp and heavy axes. No wonder that in the Church Litanies of those days men prayed : " From the fury of the Northmen, good Lord, deliver us ! "

An old Saxon song thus tells how the Saxons once defeated some of these Northmen in a great fight at Brunanburh (937), somewhere in Northumbria :

" Athelstan, earls' lord, bestower of war-rings,  
With him his brother, the atheling (prince) Edward,  
Life-long glory won them in war,  
With edge of their broadswords,  
At Brunanburh.

Driven in flight was the chief of the Northmen,  
Forced in his need to the prow of the long-ship ;  
Few were his folk,  
Sped o'er the sea the bark, fled the king in her,  
Over the fallow flood, saving his life. . . . "

## § 2

Now one of the most famous of the Viking leaders was Rollo or Rolf the Ganger or Walker. It was said that he was so called because, when he bestrode one of the small mountain ponies of Norway, his long legs touched the ground on either side, so that he seemed to walk rather than ride on his pony !

Rolf, with his followers, ravaged northern France even to the gates of Paris itself ; but the Franks of Paris turned him back. Later he made peace with their

king, who yielded to him the fair land of Normandy, where in their new homes Rolf and his followers became more or less civilized. Rolf was baptized (912) under the name of Robert; the pagan Viking chief was recognized as the Christian Duke of Normandy, and he became in name the vassal of his lord, the king of the Franks.

And so these Vikings became Normans; but they kept their old courage and spirit, and they soon made themselves one of the finest peoples in Europe. Some of these Normans won a kingdom in Sicily and ruled it well, as others did in England.

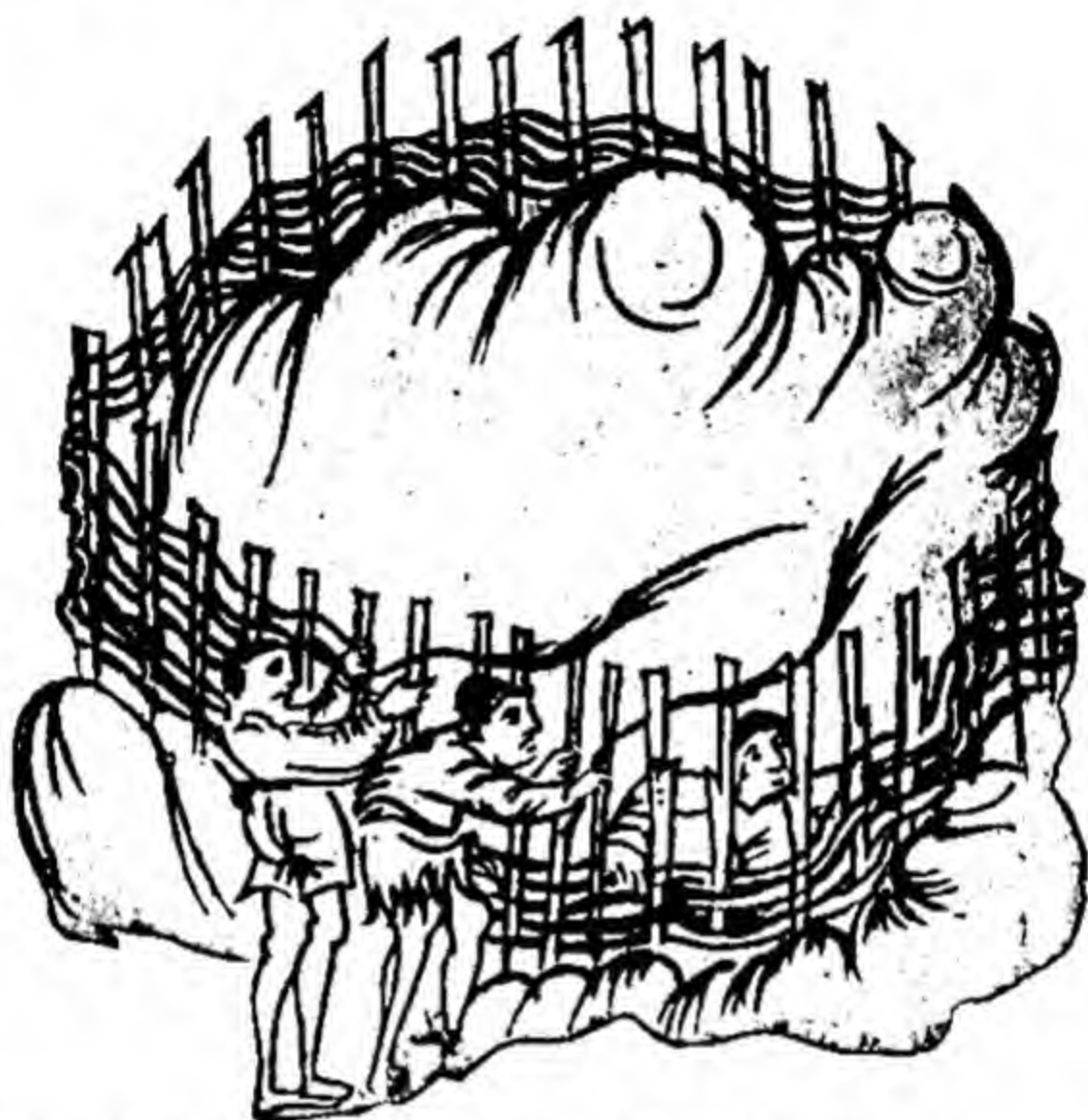
### § 3

Now a great-great-grandson of Rollo was a little boy called William. His father, known as Robert the Devil, was Duke of Normandy, and lived in a strong castle, with very thick walls, on top of a rocky hill at Falaise. He had many followers or vassals. All had sworn to fight for him when he needed them; to be loyal to him until death; and did homage to him—that is, they “became his men.” In return, he protected them; and he gave them land to “hold” from him, that is, they became “tenants” (or “holders” of land).

All over Europe many men of those times became the vassals of lords or barons. This system of lord and vassal we call “feudalism,” from the old word *feod*, meaning the “land” which the vassal held. Lesser men, called villeins, who could not afford weapons or armour, gave their labour on the lord’s estates in return for his protection and for strips of



land to supply food. Little huts might be seen clustering round the foot of the lord's castle, so that at the first hint of danger the villeins might take refuge with their cattle inside the castle walls.



Villeins (peasants) making a wattled enclosure.

*(From an 11th-century manuscript, Harl. 603.)*

Robert the Devil was killed in the Holy Land when his son William was only a little boy of seven ; so many of the boy duke's vassals thought it would be a good chance to break away. But the boy, who had always proved himself a leader even among his little playmates, soon grew old enough to show that he had a strong will of his own. While he was still a young man, he had fought and conquered all his rebellious vassals, and was beginning to be known as one of the greatest warriors in Europe.

A story told about the marriage of the young Duke

(3,410)



A CAVALRY FIGHT.

The foremost of those charging on left is Otta, in crowned helmet, cleaving with his sword the helmet of an opponent. The saltire on Otta's shield is visible. One of his followers has a shield and surcoat, with saltires, but apparently his spear has been omitted from the drawing. This is another drawing said to have been made by Matthew Paris, and though dealing with a story of Saxon times, shows the fighters in Norman costume—i.e., a "contemporary" picture. (See Frontispiece.) These two pictures show how careful we must be in studying

(British Museum Cotton MS., Nero, D 1, folio 3b: 13th century.)

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William shows the kind of man he was. He proposed to marry Matilda, daughter of Count Baldwin of Flanders, a rich and powerful noble. But when Matilda was told of this, she tossed her head scornfully and refused to marry a man whose mother was a tanner's daughter. William, hearing of this insult,



Norman military costume.

(From the 12-century manuscript *Life of St. Guthlac*, Harl. Roll. V. 6.)

rode all the way to Flanders, forced himself into Baldwin's palace, and, it is said, seized Matilda by her golden locks and thrashed her soundly. Stalking out, he remounted his foaming horse and rode home before any one could stop him. Matilda wept, her father stormed, and declared war on the insolent duke.

So Baldwin called out all his vassals, horse and foot

soldiers, and William did the same ; and they fought till both sides were exhausted. Then the leaders met to arrange a truce. William again demanded Matilda in marriage. Baldwin, amazed and indignant, repeated the proposal to his daughter, who surprised him still further by remarking, " His proposai pleaseth me well." Thus William won his bride, and she proved a good and faithful wife to him through all his adventures.

The greatest adventure of Duke William's life was the Conquest of England (1066). When William conquered England, and brought daring Norman barons and learned bishops to our land, he left a lasting mark on the laws, manners, and customs, the dress and speech of the conquered people, and indeed made a new England.

This book tries to tell the story of how he did it, and how his successors either carried on or interrupted the great work of making England a nation.

### 3. The Norman Conquest of England

#### *The Battle of Hastings (1066)*

##### § 1

WILLIAM'S Dukedom of Normandy was close to England, and the man who had never yet lost a battle looked longingly across the Channel for a new realm to conquer.

England was then ruled by Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), the last English king of the House of Alfred. He liked to gather round his court polite and learned Normans rather than the Anglo-Saxons of



his own country. Edward had no sons : his heir was his cousin Edgar Atheling, a child. But Edward had once made a kind of promise to Duke William that he should succeed him as King of England.

Men did not want a child king in those rough days ; and when Edward died, the Witan (Council of Wise Men) met according to custom, and gave the crown to Harold, Earl of Wessex. Harold was not of royal blood, but he was strong and brave.

Now Harold had once been wrecked in the Channel, and had fallen into William's hands. William, though he treated him kindly, would not let him go till he had extorted from him a promise that he, the Norman duke, should become King of England.

When, therefore, William heard that Harold was proclaimed king, he was at first "dumb with rage." Then he sent messengers to Harold, reminding him of his promise. Harold retorted that a forced oath could not bind any one. Then William swore that England should be conquered. He gave orders for many trees to be cut down to build ships, he summoned his vassals to war, and he wrote to the Pope asking his blessing before he set out to punish the oath-breaker. The Pope sent him a consecrated banner, and bade him go and prosper.



An English monarch of the  
11th century.

*(From a Psalter of the period.)*

So, on the 27th of September 1066, William crossed the Channel and landed near Hastings. He stumbled as he got out of the boat, and his soldiers murmured that this was a sign of ill-luck. "No, my friends," shouted William, lifting his soil-stained hands, "good luck, rather—a sign that I have already begun to grasp my kingdom."

Harold, meantime, had been waiting many months in the south of England for William's expected landing. But in September, news came that an exiled earl, Tostig, once Earl of Northumbria, had sailed from Norway (whose king was helping him) with a fleet of three hundred ships, and had landed in Yorkshire.

So Harold had to hurry north with his army, journeying two hundred miles in nine days' march. Then he inflicted a crushing defeat on Tostig at Stamford Bridge on the 25th of September. Only twenty-four of the three hundred ships were needed to carry back to Norway all that was left of the Norse army.

Unfortunately for Harold, a favourable wind enabled William to land in Sussex just two days after the victory at Stamford (September 27). Harold rushed south again with his faithful bodyguard (or house-carls) and with bands of the Saxon "fyrd" or national militia. He might have awaited William's coming in London, but he could not bear to see his fair lands ravaged, and so he marched his army right through Surrey and Sussex.

They encamped on a hill near the village still called Battle, in face of the Norman host, which was appearing over the hills from the direction of Hastings.



## § 2

The Saxons all fought on foot. In the centre were the king and his bodyguard, grouped round the royal standard. When attacked, they locked their shields together and stood steady as a rock, presenting an almost



Saxon fighters, including two princes, about A.D. 1000.

*(From Ælfric's Old Testament Paraphrase.)*

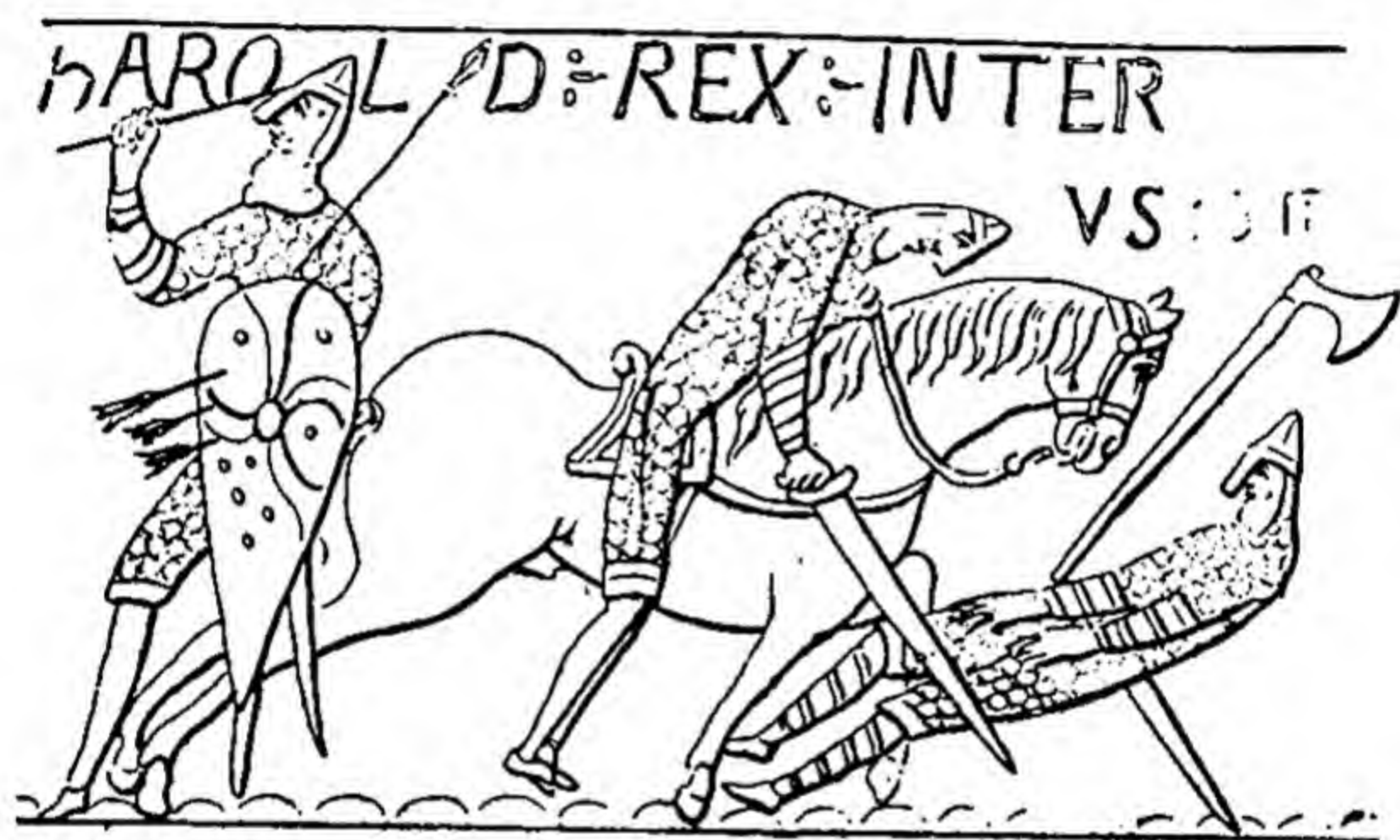
unbreakable wall to the foe. On either side was the fyrd, armed with clubs, spears, scythes, and any weapons they could procure. But Harold had no archers.

William's army looked very different. His chief strength was in his steel-clad and mounted knights (his cavalry). In front of these stood the foot-soldiers (his infantry), and in front of them the archers. The battle was to settle the fate of England. Before it began in earnest, the Norman minstrel-knight, Taillefer,



rode out in front of their ranks, singing a war-song in praise of Duke William, whirling his great sword in the air, and catching it again.

Then the Normans attacked. Their archers first let fly their arrows to try and break the English ranks ; then the infantry rushed to the attack, and afterwards



Hastings : Harold (on foot) receives an arrow in his eye.

*(From the Bayeux Tapestry. Note that the maker of the tapestry has dressed the Saxon king like a Norman.)*

the cavalry charged. But even the heavy mounted soldiers could not break the centre of the English line.

Late in the afternoon William ordered his army to pretend to retreat. Then the men of the Saxon fyrd unwisely broke their ranks and chased the Normans with shouts of triumph. Suddenly the Normans turned round and charged back on their disordered foes, and the fyrd was scattered and beaten. But even then Harold's bodyguard stood steady as a rock, and died to a man fighting round their king and his

banner. Harold himself was killed by an arrow which pierced his eye.

When night fell, the Normans stood victorious on English ground. After this famous victory at Hastings (1066), William went on to capture Dover. He then marched north, and after crossing the Thames, avoiding London, he arrived at Berkhamstead. There he was met by some of the chief men of England, who came to offer him the crown. Then he marched to London, and was crowned there on Christmas Day 1066.

### § 3

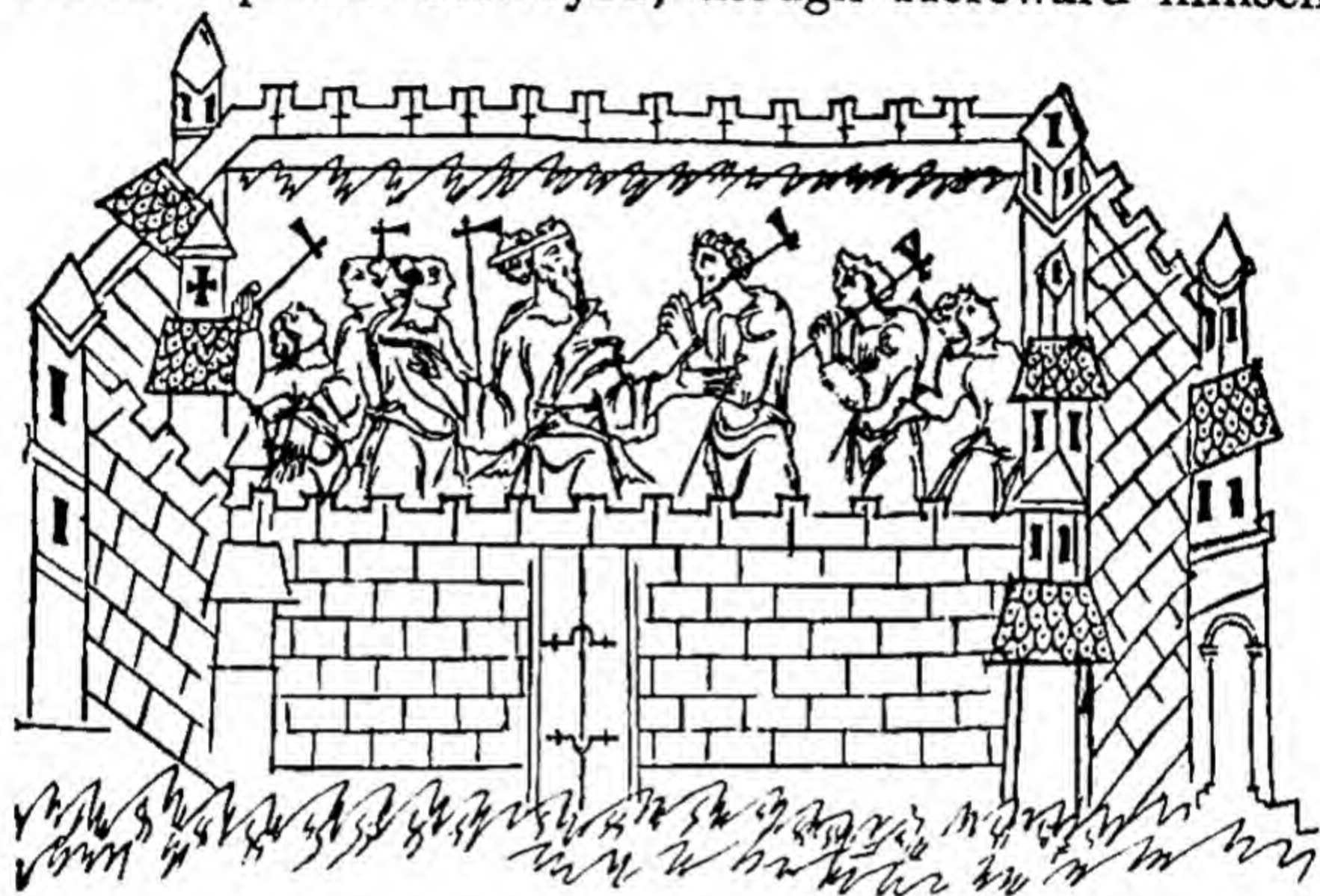
But it was many years before William could really call England his own. Harold's mother raised a rebellion in Exeter. The men of Kent revolted against the harsh rule of William's half-brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, who had been put in charge of them.

The brave Saxon, Hereward the Wake (that is, the Watchful), took refuge with many followers in the Isle of Ely, and there defied the king for several years. All the fen country around was very swampy, and the slightly higher piece of ground on which Ely stood formed a kind of "island," and an excellent place for Hereward's camp of refuge. Many outlawed and desperate men joined him there. Since they alone knew the safe paths across the marshy fens, they could sally out and do much damage to the Normans, and then retreat swiftly behind the walls of the old monastery which was their hiding-place.

But William was resolved not to be beaten ; and in the end he built a causeway two miles long, of wood



and stones, across the swamps, and broke into Hereward's stronghold, helped (it is said) by some Saxon monks who played traitor. The camp was completely broken up and destroyed, though Hereward himself



The old English burh ("borough"), or fortified place.

*(From an early MS. in the Bodleian Library.)*

escaped, hidden under some rushes in the bottom of a boat.

Hereward's end is uncertain. Some say that he escaped to France, and thence returned later on to harass William with more rebellions. Another story says that he submitted to William, who, admiring his courage, took him into favour and made him one of his chief barons.

Some of the northern lords, who had already done homage to William, broke their oath and invited the help of the kings of Denmark and Scotland "The



A PORTION OF THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

A long tapestry made to hang on the wall—embroidered perhaps in the time of William I., with many of the scenes of the Battle of Hastings and of his reign. At one time it was supposed to have been worked by his queen, Matilda, but it is now said to have been worked at a later time



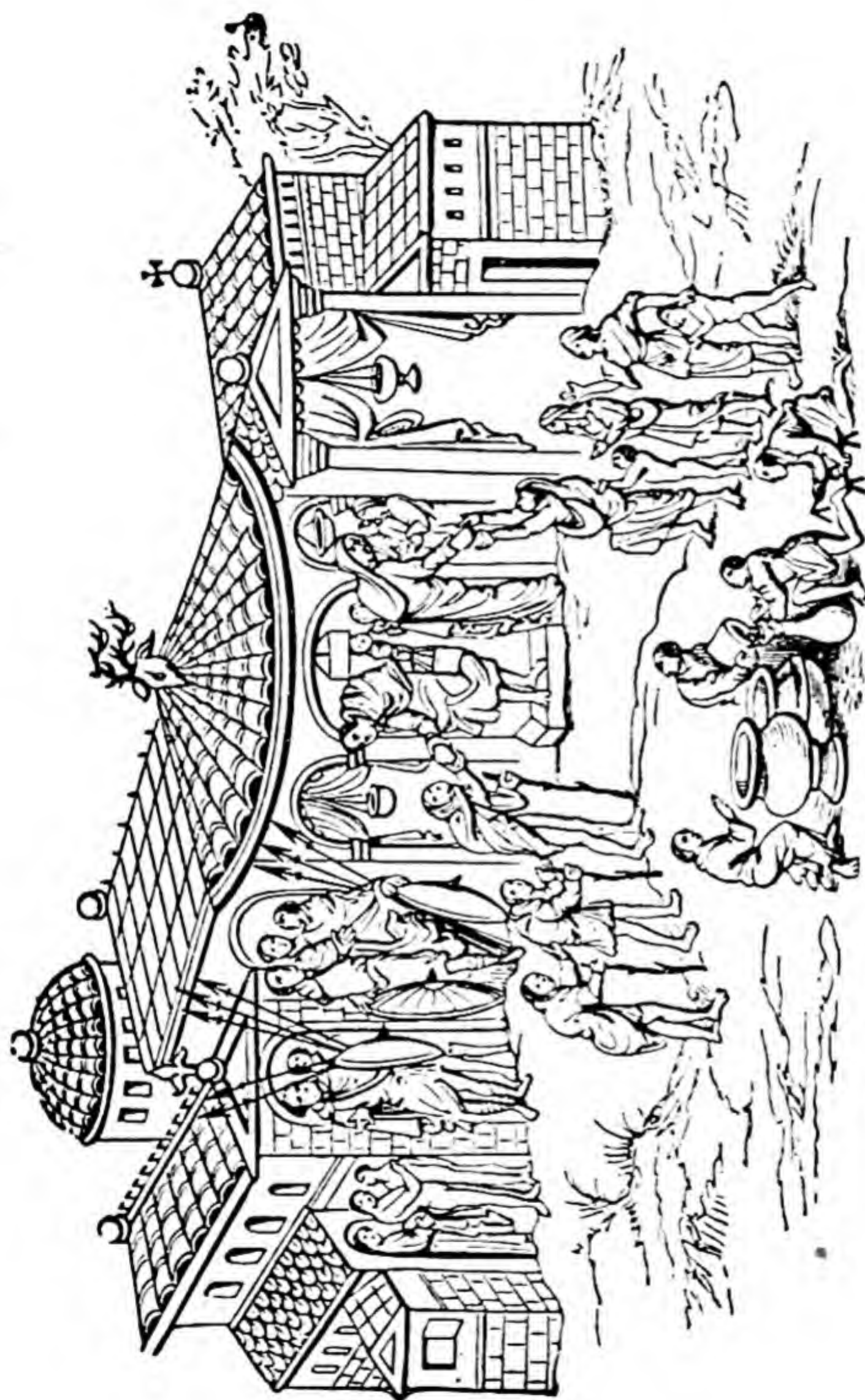
same year," says the old Saxon Chronicle, "came Sweyn, King of Denmark, into the Humber, and the country people came to meet him and made peace with him, knowing that he would overrun the land. . . . Then on the morrow came outlaws with many ships (to Peterborough) and would enter the monastery, and the monks withstood so that they could not come in. They then set it on fire, and burned all the monks' houses and all the town, save one house. They then came in through the fire, and the monks came to meet them, praying for peace. But they recked of nothing, went into the monastery, climbed up the holy rood, and took the crown from our Lord's head, all of beaten gold. . . . They took there so much gold and silver, and so many treasures and money, and raiment and books, as no man may tell to another."

But the Danes and Scots soon returned to their own country, and William took a terrible revenge on northern England (1070). He marched north with his army, and when he got there he destroyed the corn, burnt the towns and villages, and laid waste the whole countryside, so that from York to Durham not one town was left. For years no one tilled the ground. "Men, women, and children died of hunger; they laid them down and died in the roads and fields, and there was no man to bury them."

#### 4. William the Conqueror and his Work

##### § 1

AN old Saxon writer says of William I.: "He was a very stark and cruel man, so that no one durst do any-



AN ENGLISH MANOR-HOUSE OF THE 11TH CENTURY.

(From a Harleian MS., British Museum.)

The drawing was made to illustrate Psalm cxi. ("He giveth meat unto them that fear Him.") The larger building with the stag's head, and ending with a tower, is the Saxon hall. On the right is the chapel, with sanctuary lamp. The house was probably of wood, with a foundation and lower walls of masonry.



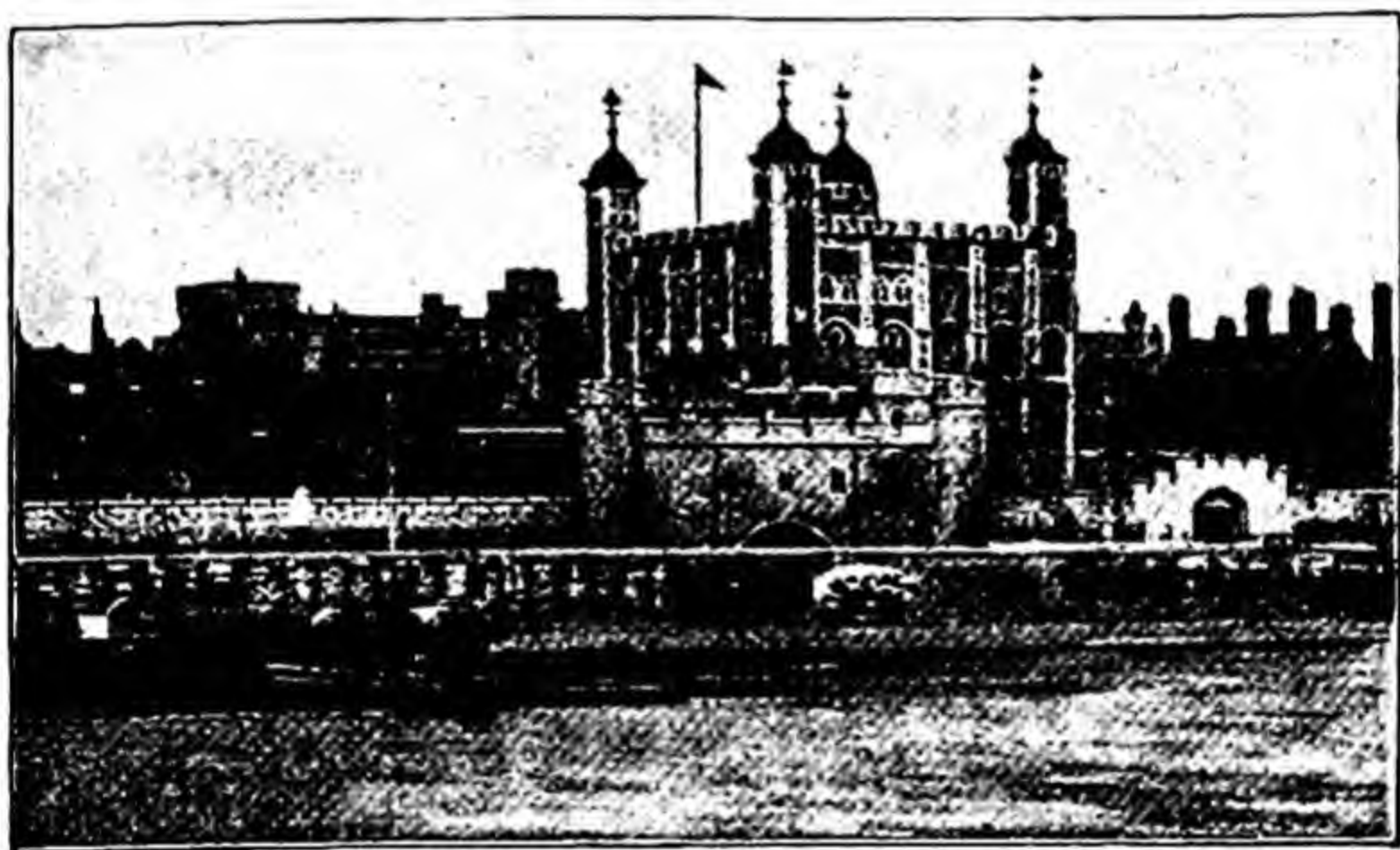
thing against his will. He was a very wise man and very powerful . . . mild to the good men who loved God, and beyond all measure severe to the men who gain-said his will." The old Chronicle also speaks of "the good peace that he made in this land ; so that a man . . . might go over his realm with his bosom full of gold unhurt. Nor durst any man slay another man, even if he had done ever so great evil to the other." William the Conqueror was so fond of hunting that he made very cruel forest laws : " he planted a great preserve for deer and laid down laws therewith : that whosoever should slay the hart or hind should be blinded. . . . As greatly did he love the tall deer as if he were their father."

Now William as Duke of Normandy was a vassal of the King of France, though he seldom dreamed of obeying his lord. But when he became king himself, he kept a stronger hold over his tenants-in-chief than did the King of France over him. He rewarded his followers, as they expected, with grants of English land, though he gave some of his barons their lands piecemeal. For instance, his half-brother Robert held 793 manors ; but he held them in twenty different counties. Thus it would be very hard for such a baron, if he wished to rebel against his overlord, to get together an army quickly.

There were also three large earldoms, set up to guard the border districts. Each was granted to one man with special powers of government. The earldoms of Kent and Durham were given to bishops who could leave no heirs, and the earldom of Chester was given to Hugh the Wolf on condition that he kept the peace on the Welsh border.

William built many castles to keep the English in order, for example, at Windsor, Oxford, Lincoln, York, and it was he who built the great Tower of London. But he allowed none of his Norman followers to build castles without his leave.

The year before he died, William ordered all landholders "that were worth aught" to come to Salis-

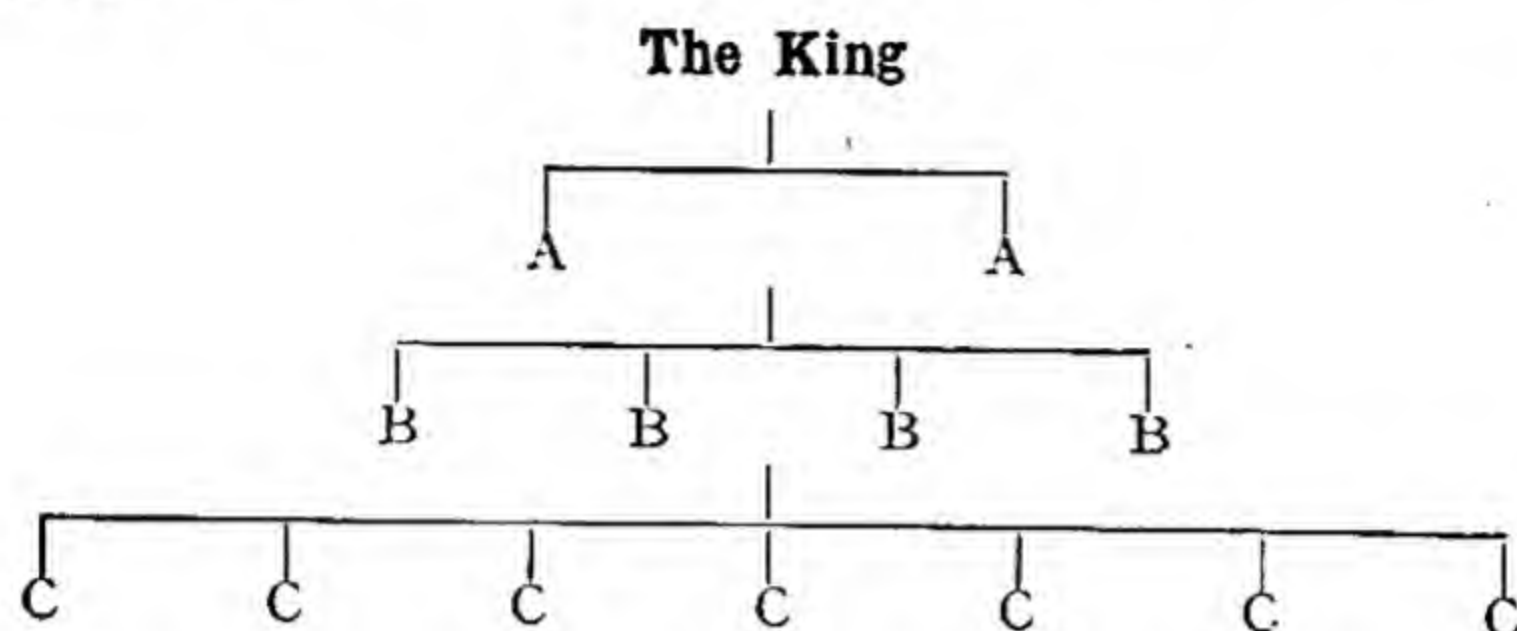


The Tower of London to-day.

bury (1086), "whosoever vassals they were," and swear to be faithful to him as their king. The highest holders—"tenants-in-chief" they are called—held their land directly from the king, and they had already done homage, *i.e.* sworn loyalty and service, to him. But William insisted that their tenants also should swear oaths of fealty to him "that they would be faithful to him against all other men"—even against the overlords who gave them their land. For all the land of England was held in



the following way. At the head of all was the king himself :



A is a tenant-in-chief (tenants-in-chief formed "the court" and the king's Great Council of advisers who helped him to govern the kingdom), a great baron who holds many estates, perhaps scattered in different counties. He keeps several estates or manors for his own use, and grants out the rest to

B B, who are landholders of lesser rank and wealth called sub-tenants.

B may keep for himself a few manors, and let out the rest to

C C, who are lesser sub-tenants.

Now William was business-like, as most of the Normans were, and he wanted to know exactly, all over England, which barons held land directly from him, who were their sub-tenants, whether the land was rich or poor, fit for corn or pasture, forest or marsh. Again, it was very important for a king in those days to know how many soldiers he could call together for his feudal army. And William could keep his unruly barons in better order if he knew how many soldiers could be used against him in case one of his great vassals rebelled.

Further, the king needed money for the expenses of

governing his country, and he obtained the money partly by making his tenants-in-chief pay taxes. So William wanted to know how much each could afford to pay him.

The king had already sent messengers to nearly every county in England. They would lodge per-

haps at the county town, and then send a message to every village in the county, ordering the reeve or headman, the parish priest, and six peasants or villeins to come before them and give an account of their village. These men came, no doubt grumbling and in some fear, but they dared not disobey.



Taking toll at a city gate.

(From a Psalter, Harleian MS. 603.)

Then they had to give an exact account to the king's officers as to how much land there was in the village, of what kind, and who held it, and of whom it was held. "So very strictly did the king cause the survey to be made, that there was not a single hide nor a rood\* of land, nor was there sheep, ox, cow, pig, horse, mill, nor fish-pond, that was not set down in the accounts, and then all these writings were brought to him."

And these writings were entered in what is called

\* A *hide* was about 120 acres; a *rood* a small piece of land, perhaps  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre.



the *Domesday Book*, which can still be seen in the Public Record Office in London. It is not easy to read—except in translations—because it was written in Latin, and most of the words were shortened. But it gives us a good picture of what England was like in the time of William I., and for many years later.

## § 2

What were the results of the Norman Conquest? The English people naturally did not love the king who had conquered them. Nor did they love the Norman barons, who were given most of the best lands and who treated the conquered English with contempt, and disdained to learn their language. But the English had been very unruly and long divided amongst themselves. So it was a good thing in the long run that they should be disciplined by a strong people like the Normans. One old English writer realized this, and wrote :



A Norman bed.  
(From a 12th-century MS.)

“The desire after literature and religion had decayed for several years before the arrival of the Normans. The clergy, contented with a very slight degree of learning, could scarcely stammer out the words of the Sacraments. . . . The monks mocked the rule of their order by fine vestments. The Saxon nobles were given up to



## BUILDING IN THE 11TH CENTURY.

This is from the manuscript of an Anglo-Saxon poem written in Norman times, and therefore probably shows Norman as well as Saxon building in progress. The central arch is certainly Norman, while the others are Saxon. The central figure seems to be taking orders from an abbot.

(*Ælfric's Paraphrase—British Museum Cotton MS., Claudius, B iv., folio 9.*)



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luxury and wantonness. They consumed their whole substance in mean and despicable houses—not like the Normans, who in noble and splendid mansions lived with frugality. The Normans are a race used to war, and can hardly live without it. They are fierce in rushing against the enemy, and where strength fails of success, ready to use stratagem, or to corrupt by bribery. They envy their equals, wish to excel their superiors, and plunder their subjects, though they defend them from others.

“You might see,” he adds, “churches rise in every village, and monasteries in the towns and cities, built after a style unknown before.”

This Norman style can be recognized by its round arches and strong, massive pillars. One of the finest of their churches is the cathedral of Durham, situated on a high rock near the great Norman castle overlooking the river Wear.—



An aisle in the Chapel of St. John,  
Tower of London.

*(Built by William the Conqueror.)*



## 5. How People lived in Norman Times

### § I

By far the greatest number of the English people lived in villages. There were then no big cities nor smoky factory towns, though there were perhaps a hundred or so little towns which grew more important later on. In all England there were less than four million people—about half as many as there are in London to-day!

The chief building of a village in Norman times was the manor-house, a fairly large stone building, where lived the lord of the manor, the only well-to-do man in the place. Near by was the church, which was then used also as a kind of village institute for meetings and other purposes. The remaining houses, clustering near by, were only wooden, straw-thatched hovels. In these lived the peasants, who were called in *Domesday Book* cottars and villeins.

The village itself or manor was usually divided into three big fields; one was sown with barley, one with wheat, and one was left fallow (*i.e.* unsown) for a year so as to give the ground a rest. Next year wheat would be sown on the fallow ground, barley where wheat had been, and so on.

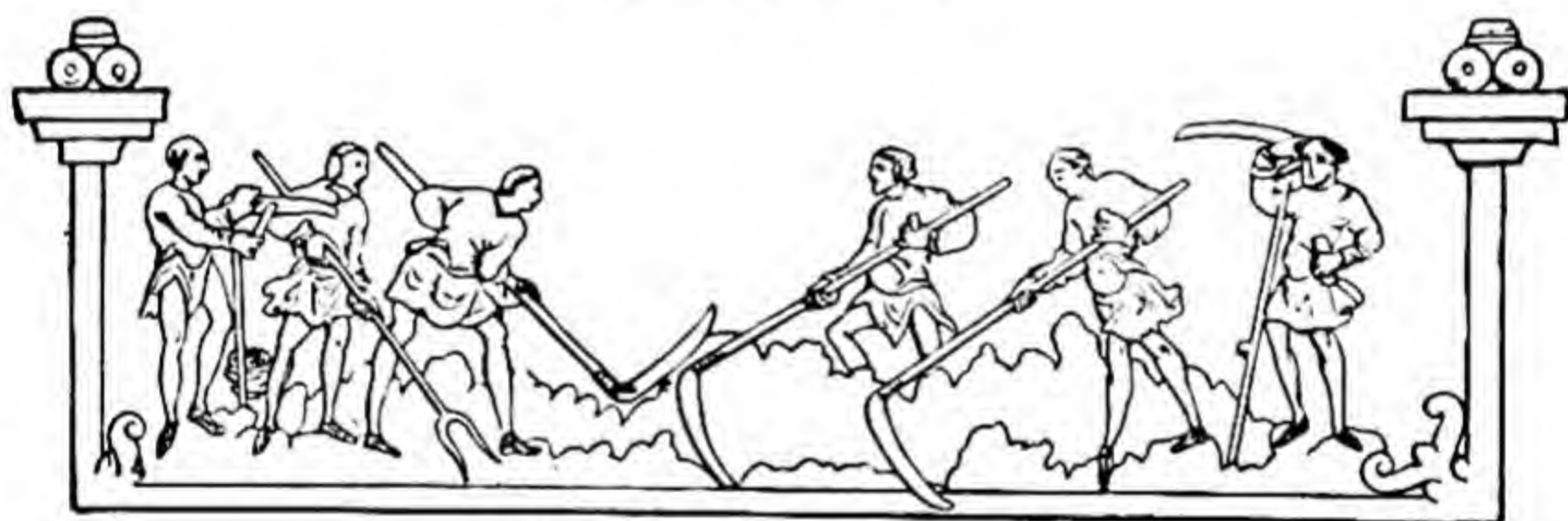
A villein spent his time on various kinds of farm-work. He was not exactly what we to-day call either a farmer or a farm labourer. He was allotted a share of the village land—strips in each of the three big fields—so that he might have some of the better as well as some of the poorer soil. Each man's strips were divided from his neighbours only by a mound or baulk of earth.



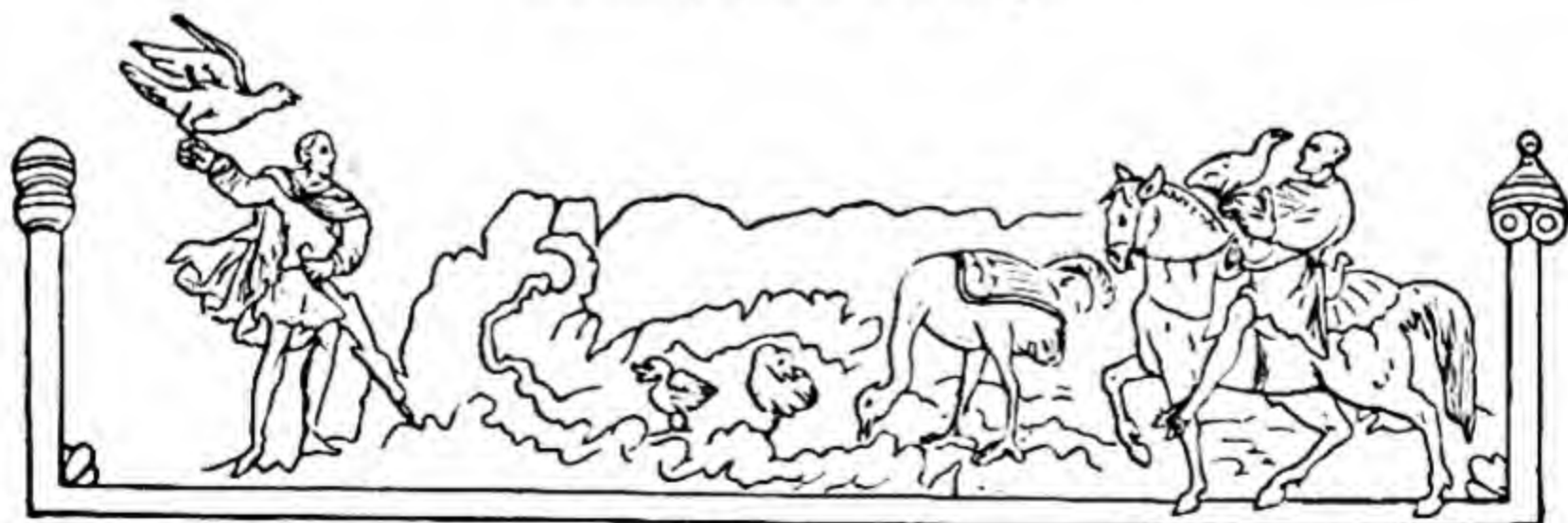
Tending the sheep.



Cutting timber.



Cutting grass for hay.



Throwing the hawk.

SCENES IN ENGLISH OUTDOOR LIFE IN THE IITH CENTURY.  
*(From a Saxon Calendar in the British Museum.)*



A villein might have only one ox, or even none ; and it required eight to draw the clumsy wooden plough. So he joined forces with his neighbours, and they all lent what oxen were required until the whole field was ploughed. At harvest-time they worked together, and after each man had gathered in the corn from his own strips, the cattle and sheep of the villagers were allowed to roam over the stubble till next plough-time.

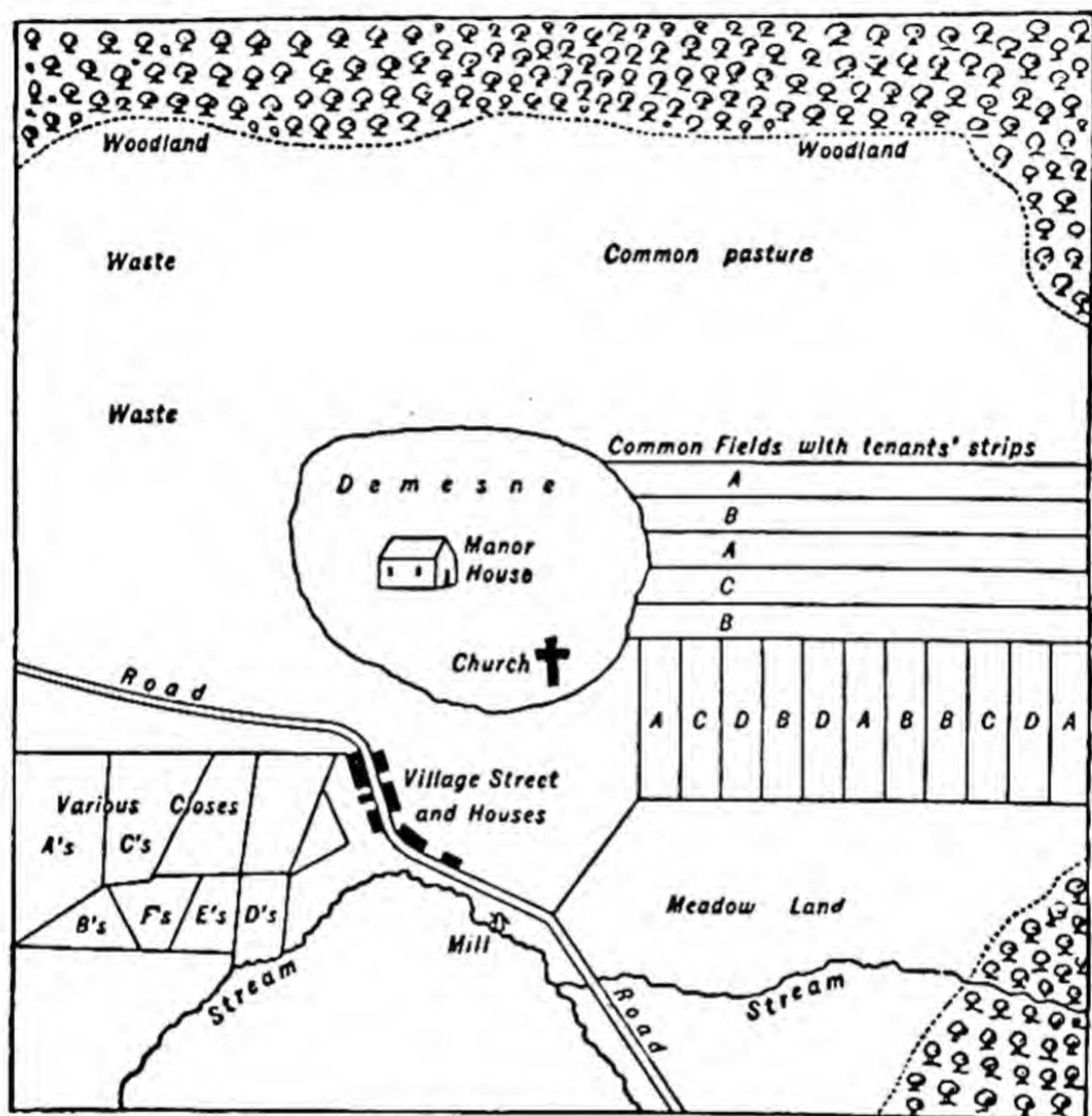
This arrangement worked well enough for their rough and ready farming. But it did not encourage a keen man to improve his allotment by hard work, since he could not claim the same strip from year to year, nor could he avoid his neighbours' weeds spreading to his strips, for there were no hedges between the portions of land.

After harvest the villein took his corn to be ground in the lord's mill, and very likely grumbled because the miller was apt to keep rather more than the share allowed him for his work of grinding. Then the villein took his year's supply of corn home to his wife. He used to keep two or three hens in the little garden or toft round his cottage. Perhaps, also, he had a cow for milking ; a few pigs, fed on forest or waste land, which supplied him with bacon ; and some sheep, which he sheared himself. His wife and daughters would spin the wool and weave it into rough "homespun" cloth, from which the family was clothed.

There was much open waste land or "common" where each villein's cattle could feed, and each was allowed to cut wood in the forest for fuel and for making rough furniture, hurdles, and farming tools.

There were no shops. Nearly everything he wanted,

the villein made or grew for himself. Perhaps once a year he might go to a big fair, if one was held near by, where he bought what he could not make, *e.g.* iron for



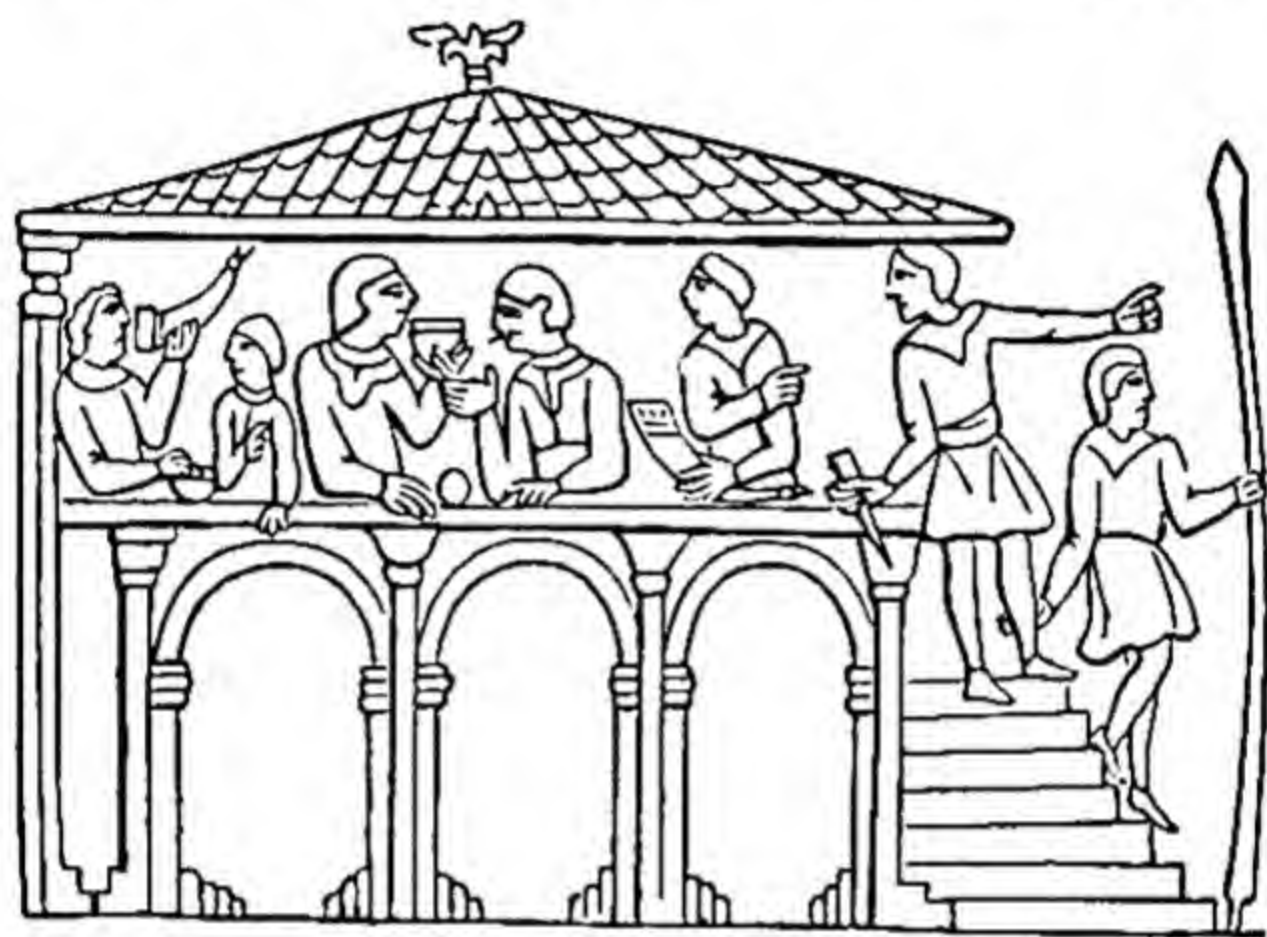
Old system of pasture and arable land.  
(A, B, C, and D are the tenants.)

knives, scythes, and plough-tips, fish for Lent, and salt for preserving meat for the winter. For in those days and long afterwards they did not know how to feed the cattle after the summer was over, so they killed them and lived on salt meat in the winter. They had few kinds of fruit or vegetables ; no sugar—they



used honey instead ; no tea or coffee ; but they drank much home-brewed beer.

The paths and roads were very bad, and unlighted at night ; and there were many robbers lurking in the great forests that cut off village from village. So the villein was not anxious to leave his home ; and if his



Normans at dinner.  
(From the Bayeux Tapestry.)

life seems to us to be coarse, uncomfortable, and narrow, with too much hard work and too little pleasure, still he usually had enough to eat and drink, and he had no fear of being unemployed.

## § 2

The lord had his own lands or home farm near his manor-house. Each villein did one or more day's work a week throughout the year for his lord, with extra work at harvest-time and other busy seasons. Just as a richer man paid for his land by military service,

so the villein paid by his labour. Without his lord's leave he could not leave the village, nor send his son away to earn his living elsewhere, nor arrange for the marriage of his daughter. On the other hand, the lord had to observe the "customs" of the manor, and so could not turn the villein off the land; and for a very long time both sides were satisfied with this arrangement.

Sometimes the lord was a great baron, such as Hugh the Wolf, Earl of Chester, who held many manors. The earl and his large staff of servants—cooks, bakers, brewers, spinners, smiths, carpenters—would move round from one of his manors to another, spending a month or so at each.

But even if he were a great man, his house or castle was not very comfortable in early Norman times.

The main room was a large stone hall, in which he and his family, his servants and villeins, all sat down to dinner together, the lord and his family being on a little platform or dais at one end. After dinner the trestle tables were cleared away, and perhaps some wandering minstrels would come in and sing or recite to the company, or a juggler would give a performance.

There was no glass in the windows, and no chimney—only a big hole in the roof to let out the smoke from the log-fire which blazed in the middle of the room. At night the servants slept on the floor, and only the lord and his family had a separate bedroom.



A juggler, 11th century.

(*Psalter of Boulogne.*)



## 6. England under the Norman Kings

William I., 1066-1087.    William II., 1087-1100.  
Henry I., 1100-1135.    Stephen, 1135-1154.

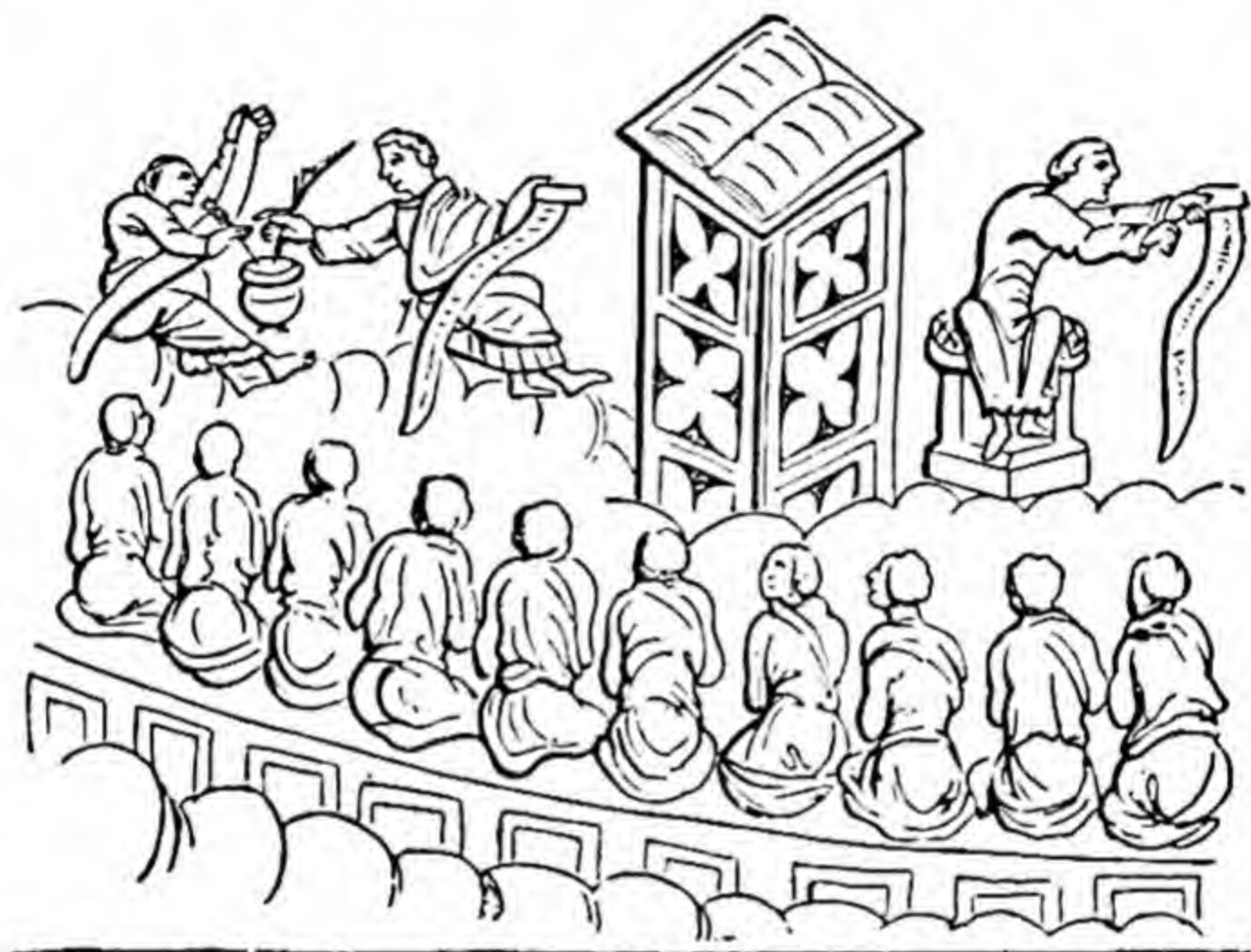
### § 1

WILLIAM the Conqueror died in 1087. His son, William II., nicknamed Rufus or the Red, was a cruel and greedy man who made himself hated by English and Normans alike. In 1089 William I.'s wise friend and adviser, Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, died. For four years William II. refused to appoint any one in his place, so that he could take the revenues for himself. But four years later (1093) it happened that Rufus became very ill while staying at the monastery of Gloucester, and he thought he was going to die. The monks besought him to make amends for his evil life, and in particular to name a new archbishop.

Among those monks at the king's bedside stood the saintly Anselm, noted for his piety and learning, who had come from the same abbey of Bec in Normandy whence Lanfranc came. To every one's surprise the king, raising himself on his elbow, pointed out Anselm as the new archbishop.

No man could have been fitter for the post, yet Anselm shrank from it, and the monks had to force the pastoral staff, the symbol of his office, into his unwilling hands. "Will you yoke me, a weak old sheep, with that fierce young bull, the King of England?" he asked.

Then William II. recovered from his illness, and trouble soon arose for Anselm. The mildest and sweetest of men where his own interests were concerned, he stood up boldly for the rights of the Church ; and William II. was the last man to respect these rights



A Norman school about 1130-1140.

*(From a Psalter of the period.)*

when he was not terrified by the fear of death. Then Anselm had to go into exile. And no one grieved when Rufus was killed by an arrow from an unknown hand while he was hunting in the New Forest in Hampshire.

## § 2

Henry I. (1100-1135), youngest of the Conqueror's sons, succeeded. He was a good king, and was called the "Lion of English Justice." He had much fighting to do against his brother Robert of Normandy and



against his Norman barons, and he quarrelled with Anselm, his saintly archbishop. But he threw himself on the support of the English. He gave them a charter promising to observe their old customs. He married Matilda, a Saxon princess. Then he recalled Anselm, an act which pleased everybody.

Henry I. also revived the old Saxon Shire and Hundred Courts, for these gave a Saxon a better chance of justice than if he were tried for all offences in the court of the manor presided over by the Norman lord or his steward.

Unfortunately, Henry's only son was drowned in a shipwreck off the Channel Islands, and the king left only a daughter, Matilda, to succeed him. No one thought it possible for a woman to rule in those days; besides, Matilda had a haughty, overbearing manner, and no one liked her husband, Geoffrey of Anjou, a foreigner and a man with a terrible temper.

### § 3

So the barons in the Great Council chose Matilda's cousin, Stephen, Count of Blois, as king. Stephen was "a mild and a good man," says the Chronicle, and he was brave as a lion in battle. But he was too "mild" to keep in order the rough barons who had put him on the throne. War soon broke out between the party of Matilda and that of Stephen.

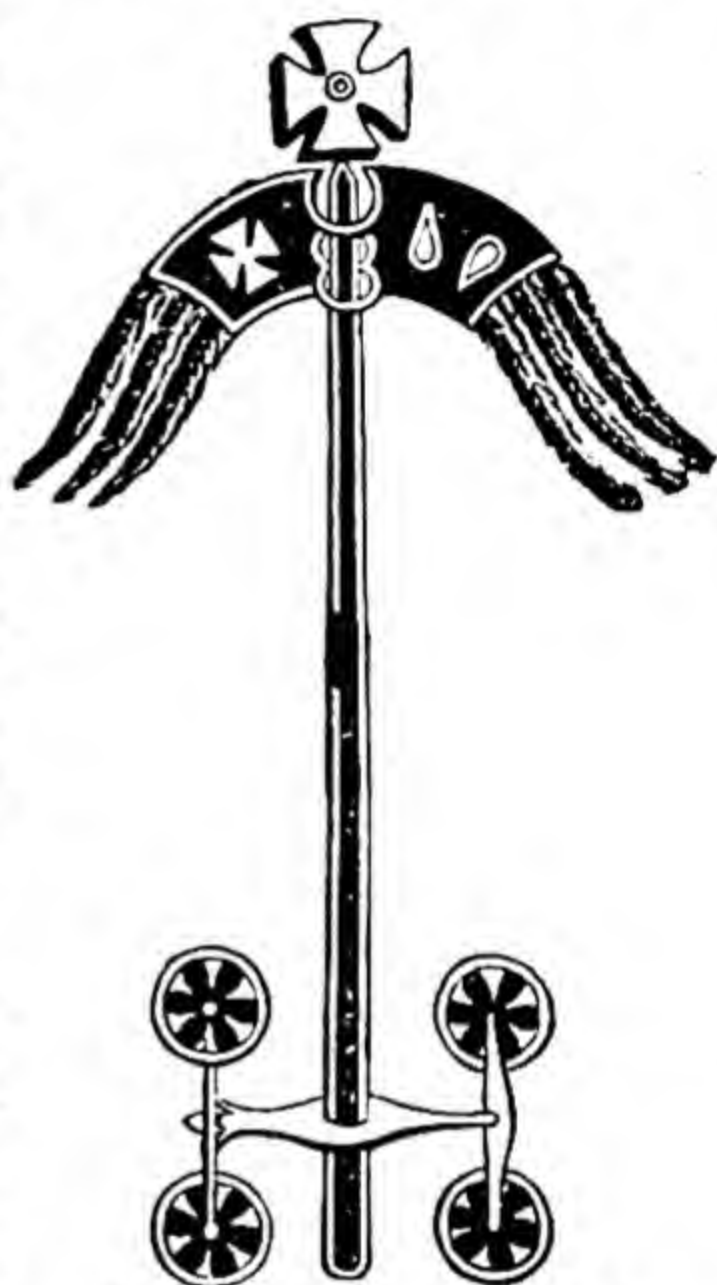
Meantime the Scottish king invaded Northumberland. He was beaten back at Northallerton in what was known as the Battle of the Standard (1138). The English were led by Thurstan, Archbishop of York, and fought round a cart on which floated the standards

of St. Wilfred of Ripon, St. John of Beverley, and St. Peter of York.

Stephen soon managed to quarrel with some of his best supporters, who now deserted him for Matilda. She became, in fact, queen for a time, but the barons soon tired of her proud ways. The fortunes of war turned against her, and she was besieged in Oxford. She escaped by the help of a rope let down from the walls on a moonlight night, dressed in white to match the snow which lay thick on the ground. Then she crossed the frozen Thames on foot and joined her friends.

It was in those days that England knew the full horrors of feudal life, unchecked by a strong king like the Conqueror.

"When the traitors perceived that he (Stephen) was a mild man, and soft, and did no justice, then did they all wonder," says the old Saxon Chronicle. "Every powerful baron built himself castles. Then they took those men that they imagined had any property, both by night and by day, peasant men and women, and put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them. They put them in dungeons in which were adders and snakes and toads, and killed them so. When the wretched men had no more to give, they robbed and burned all the towns, so that thou



The English standard,  
A.D. 1138.

(From a contemporary MS.)



mightest well go all a day's journey, and thou shouldst never find a man sitting in a town, or the land tilled. Then was corn dear, and flesh and butter and cheese. If two or three men came riding to a town, all the township fled before them, imagining them to be robbers. Men said openly that Christ and His saints slept."

The civil war lasted for almost the whole of Stephen's reign. Then his son died, and so Stephen came to an agreement with Matilda that her son should succeed him as king. Stephen himself died the next year (1154). Then the crown passed without dispute to Matilda's son, Henry. Once more England had a great king, Henry II. of Anjou (1154-1189). \*

## 7. Emperors and Popes

### *The Story of Canossa (1077)*

#### § I

THE Church in the early Middle Ages was strong, because in the main it stood for Right against Might. It was strong also because like an army it took its orders from one head of all Western Christendom—the Pope.

"Pope" (which means "Father") was the name given to the Bishop of Rome—the city which had ruled the world in the time of the great Roman Empire. St. Peter, it was said, had been the first Bishop of Rome; and his successors remembered the text, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church."

Many wise and brave men had become Popes. Amongst the most famous of the early Popes was Leo the Great. It was he who went (A.D. 452) unarmed

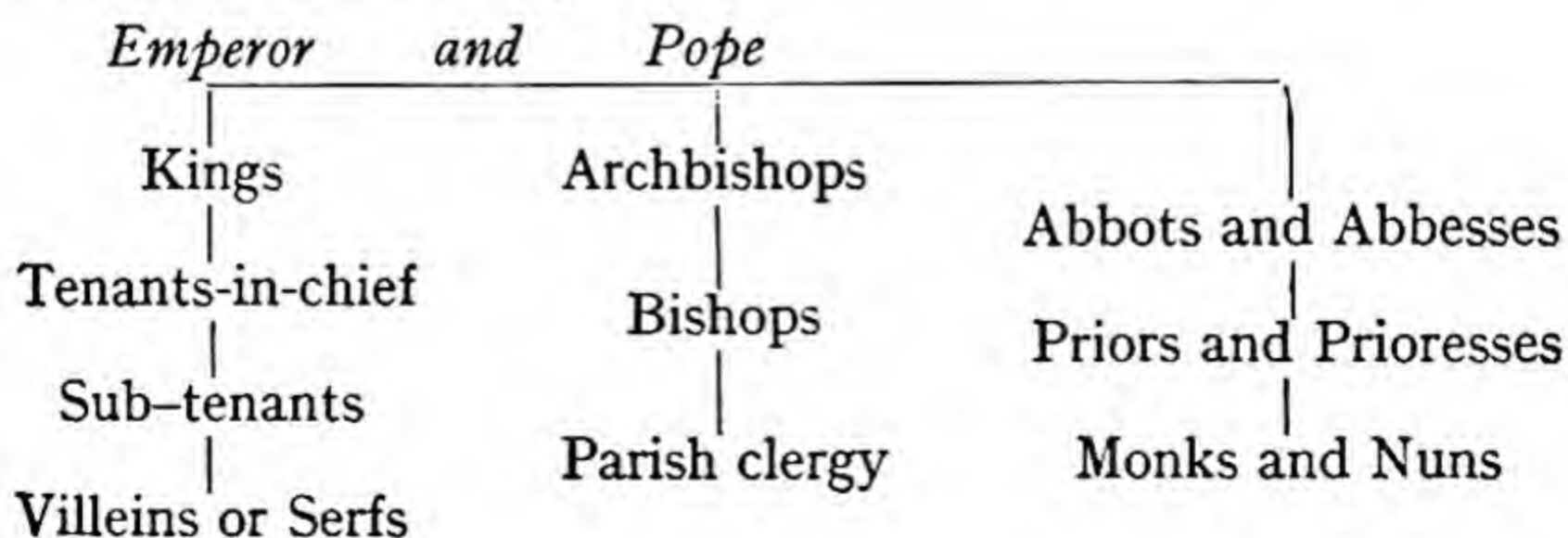
\* See Chapter 9.

to meet the terrible chief of the "barbarian" Huns, Attila, before whom all Europe was trembling, and bade him turn back from his intended attack on Rome. And Attila, "the Scourge of God," obeyed him.

A hundred years later another great Pope, Gregory the Great, sent Augustine to convert the English (597).

Living in Rome, the capital of the world, the Popes came naturally to be regarded as heads of the Christian Church. So every archbishop and bishop received the spiritual signs of their sacred office—the ring and the staff—from the Pope as the head of the Church. "Holy Father," said an archbishop once to the Pope, "I am the weak creature of your hands, my Church is your Church, my goods are your goods." The heads of monasteries and convents also took their orders direct from the Pope, and not from the bishop of the diocese in which they lived.

Society in the Middle Ages might be represented somewhat in this way :



The Pope's tiara, or triple crown.



All through the dreary confusion and endless wars of the early Middle Ages, men in Western Europe never lost sight of the idea that there should be a Pope and an Emperor to whom they could look for guidance. And this was quite a good and sensible idea—to keep

the peoples in a kind of brotherhood, as in the time of the old Roman Empire—if it had been possible to carry it out.

When Egbert was King of Wessex in England (A.D. 800), there was a strong and able king of the Franks. He was named Charlemagne, and he had made himself so powerful that the Pope invited him to revive the old Roman Empire which had kept peace in the world for so long. So, on Christmas Day of that famous year, Charlemagne was crowned Emperor at Rome by the Pope, amid great rejoicings.



Charlemagne.

This new Empire is called the Holy Roman Empire, because its heads were a Christian Emperor and the Pope. It lasted in one form or another just over a thousand years from its foundation.

All that time there was always one man called the "Emperor," to whom most kings and princes in western Europe were supposed to owe some kind of allegiance. After Charlemagne, the Emperor came to

be chosen by certain German princes and bishops, and was generally, but not always, a German himself. Men addressed the Emperor respectfully, but their regard for him often went very little further.

Sometimes the Pope and the Emperor were very good friends, and worked well together; but often



Western Europe in the time of Charlemagne.

they had angry disputes. One of the Popes laid down this doctrine: "As God made the sun and moon to rule over the day and night, so He has appointed the Pope and the Emperor to rule the world, but the Emperor is like the moon, which only shines by reflection from the greater light of the sun." "No," said the Emperor, "we are like the two swords of the disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, of which the



Lord said, 'It is enough.' We are each equally set to keep order in the world ; you over the Church and men's souls, we over the State and the bodies of men."

## § 2

Who is this man shivering in a thin shirt and standing barefoot in the snow outside this grim feudal castle ? It is the Emperor Henry IV., proudest of the princes of Europe.

About the time when William I. was making himself really King of England, there was a very remarkable Pope, called Hildebrand, Gregory VII. He was a good man, earnestly wishing to make the Church better and more holy ; and to do this he set himself to free it from all "lay" control. (A "layman" is any one who is not a clergyman.)

Hildebrand quarrelled with the Emperor Henry IV. about "investiture." A bishop wore and was "invested" with a special ring and carried a staff, as a sign of his office in the Church ; but he was also a baron or a tenant-in-chief of the king, and thus bound to do him homage for his lands. Henry IV. claimed that he had a right to "invest" the bishop with the signs of his office—the ring and the staff—at the time he received the bishop's homage for the lands. Hildebrand retorted in effect, "No, every bishop owes allegiance only to me, the head of Christ's army on earth ; and I am the person to appoint and invest him."

The Emperor tried to defy Hildebrand, but most of his clergy and some of his barons refused to support him. Hildebrand, who was staying at the castle of Canossa, in northern Italy, ordered the Emperor to

come and submit to him, and Henry, realizing the Pope's enormous power, felt obliged to come.

In bitter winter weather, bringing his wife and child in a sledge over the snow-covered Alps, he journeyed to Canossa. Clad in the penitent's shirt, he knocked humbly at the castle gate. But Hildebrand made him wait outside three days in the snow before he called him in, to beg forgiveness for his sin. The story spread quickly round Europe. No Pope was ever more feared and respected than the great Hildebrand.

At last, the quarrel about investiture was settled by an agreement that the Pope should invest the archbishop with his ring and staff (the signs of his spiritual work), while the king received his homage as a tenant-in-chief or baron. And this was how the quarrel between Henry I. of England and Archbishop Anselm\* was settled also.

The history of Central Europe for hundreds of years continued to be very confused and uninspiring. The Emperors were so busy fighting, often against the Popes, that their feudal vassals—counts, dukes, bishops, and princelings—did more or less as they liked. They set up petty kingdoms, constantly waging war on each other and making life wretched for the ordinary people.

The cities of Italy† profited by these quarrels, taking sides now with the Emperor, now with the Pope, and they made themselves strong and free.



An archbishop.

\* See Chapter 6, § 2.  
(3,410)

† See Chapters 27, 28, 29



However, the wars went on. The great Italian poet, Dante (1265-1321), who had seen so much of the misery resulting from incessant wars, wrote :



Portrait of Dante by Giotto.

*(The portrait in the background is supposed to be that of the artist.)*

“ Of all things that are ordered to secure blessings to men, peace is the best. And hence the word which sounded to the shepherds from above was not riches,

nor pleasure, nor honour, nor length of life, nor health, nor strength, nor beauty, but—peace. For the heavenly host said, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth PEACE to men of goodwill.’ Therefore also ‘PEACE be with you’ was the salutation of the Saviour of Mankind. For it behoved Him who was the greatest of Saviours to utter in His greeting the greatest of saving blessings.”

But as we know, the world has not even yet learnt this great lesson.

### 8. Bishops, Priests, and Monks

PROBABLY when the priest, the reeve, and the six villeins came to give account of their village to the king’s officers for *Domesday Book*,\* the others nudged the priest and bade him do the talking, as he was the only one who had been to school. The villeins could talk nothing but Old English, which the Norman-French officials despised too much to learn. But the priest, if he did not know French, could speak Latin, which was understood by all the king’s clerks and officers.

The priest was generally the only man in the village, not excepting the lord of the manor himself, who could read and write. On Sundays he preached to the whole village, for there was only one kind of church in those days, and everybody attended it. The priest probably lived in a cottage little better than that of his neighbours; possibly his father and brothers were simple villeins: yet he was not afraid to stand up to the lord of the manor and rebuke him openly if he acted unjustly towards the peasants.

\* See Chapter 4, § 1.



Above the priest was the bishop. He might be a nobleman by birth, as was Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, half-brother to King William I.; or he might, like the priest, be a humbly born man who had made his way in the Church by his piety or his learning.



A bishop.

A bishop was a tenant-in-chief of the king, and was bound, like other barons, to provide the king with so many mounted soldiers in time of war. He was, of course, excused from following the king to battle himself, though sometimes in those rough times bishops were quite ready to fight as fully armed soldiers. Still most men were rather shocked, even in those days, if they did so.

There is a story that King Richard I. once took prisoner a fighting bishop. The Pope sent a messenger to demand the release of his "son in the Church." Richard sent the bishop's coat of mail to the Pope, quoting the words of Joseph's brethren, "Know then whether this be thy son's coat or no!" We are not told how the Pope managed to answer him.

Many of the clergy, however, were neither bishops nor parish priests. They lived together in "religious houses," called monasteries for men, convents or nunneries for women. A man went into a monastery because he felt that he could not be a good Christian and serve God properly, unless he forsook the world in which there was so much bloodshed, violence, and greed of gain.

Every monk took a threefold vow: of Poverty—he

gave away everything he possessed, and henceforth called nothing his own, not even his rough tunic, or the Prayer Book he used in chapel ; of Celibacy—he was never to marry and have children, so that he might not be distracted by earthly ties ; of Obedience—he



A Norman Abbey gateway.

was to give his chief or abbot absolute obedience, and never complain of any task he was told to perform.

There were several different "Orders" of monks, each with its own set of rules. But they all agreed that God was to be served in two ways, by worship and by work—*Laborare est orare*, Latin for "To labour is to pray," was their motto in their best days.

The Cistercian monks were the chief Order in England. They took their name from the French abbey





A MONK IN THE WRITER'S ROOM OR SCRIPTORIUM.



of Citeaux, which had a famous English abbot, Stephen Harding. The Cistercians used to build their monasteries in wild and lonely spots on the green hillsides far away from towns. Here they pastured their sheep, for they were clever at sheep-farming, and their wool was known and valued all over Europe. The hours when they were not working in the fields they spent in the beautiful abbey church, which was always the centre of the monastery. Seven times a day they gathered here to praise God, and the later Cistercians loved to have everything beautiful in their chapel—the stone-work, the carvings, the stained-glass windows, and the books.

Many monks gave themselves to another kind of work, the copying and writing of books. Every copy of a book in those days had to be “manuscript,” which is Latin for “written by hand.” Many copies, especially of the Psalms, were made by patient monks who worked day after day for years, lovingly transcribing in their neat script and embroidering the initial letters with gold and beautiful colours. Other monks studied that they might teach in the monastery school. There were probably few other schools in those days.

The monks wrote and studied in the cloisters—“the monk’s home.” This was a kind of open veranda built round the four sides of a square lawn or “garth.” The cloisters must have been very cold and draughty in the winter, for a fire was allowed only to sick monks in the infirmary.

The monks lived very sparsely. They had only a morsel of bread for breakfast ; dinner of boiled beans or some simple dish was at noon ; supper would be at



about seven. They ate in silence in their refectory while one read aloud from a book of sermons. In fasting seasons (Advent, Lent, and the fast days) they went without meat.

The monks went early to bed, for the chapel bell summoned them to the first service by candlelight at midnight. Then they went back to bed and lay down in their tunics, for it was not worth while to take them off before the chapel bell summoned them to early "matins," or morning service.

The only members who ever went outside the monastery were the abbot and one or two monks who did the monastery business of selling wool, buying provisions, etc. The others might occasionally have speech with outsiders, when a rich man stayed the night in the guest-house, or when the poor crowded to the gates to receive the daily alms of broken meats.

It was, in the early days of monasteries, a hard life. Yet sometimes for one who wanted a quiet life, it must have seemed a haven of peace from the turmoil of constant war and strife outside :

" For if there be heaven on earth  
Or ease to any soul,  
It is in the cloister or the school.  
To the cloister man cometh  
Not to chide nor fight,  
All is book and obedience,  
Reading and learning.  
In the school the clerk is scorned  
If he will not learn :  
Great love and liking there :  
Each loveth other."

So wrote a poor priest, named Langland, in his

poem, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, written in the fourteenth century, by which time many monks and others had departed from the good rules of earlier days.

## 9. Henry II., a Great King (1154–1189)

### § 1

HENRY II. was the great-grandson of William the Conqueror, and the son of the Empress Matilda. He became king (1154) on the death of Stephen,\* the weak king in whose reign there was so much fighting among the barons and misery for the common people. In appearance Henry II. was short and thickset, with a bull neck, fiery red hair, and flashing eyes. He was restless and energetic, a good sportsman, a keen student, and a hard worker all in one.

“In the eyes of any one but an Englishman, Henry II. was of greater consequence as a European ruler than as an English king.” For he was lord of more lands in France than even the French king—he inherited Normandy from his mother, Anjou from his father, and Aquitaine from his wife ; that is, he ruled all the great western provinces of France as well as England. His son married the heiress of Brittany.

In his reign some of his barons went over to Ireland and conquered part of it from the Irish chiefs, who were always quarrelling among themselves. Henry II. visited them later on, to receive their homage.

Henry II. could also call himself overlord of

\* See Chapter 6.



Scotland, for the King of Scotland, while helping some English rebels, once fell into Henry's hands and was not allowed to go till he had done homage (1174).

With so large an Empire, extending from the



Hunting costumes, 13th century.

(Harl. MS. 4,751.)

Grampians to the Pyrenees, Henry II. was constantly moving about from year's end to year's end.

"If the king has promised to stay anywhere," wrote one of his courtiers, "you may be certain that

he will start very early in the morning and thwart everybody's plans. You may see men rushing about as if they were mad, beating their horses, driving their wagons one with another, every one in a fuss. . . . If, on the other hand, the king announces that he will start out early in the morning for a certain place, his plan will certainly be altered, and you may be certain that he will sleep till midday. Then you will see the pack-horses waiting with their burdens, the wagons standing ready, the carriers dozing, the pedlars worrying, and all grumbling at one another."

## § 2

Henry II. weakened the power of the barons and strengthened his kingly power in several ways. His barons were bound by their oath of homage to follow him in war for only forty days ; and when he needed to fight in France (as he often did) this was not of much use. So he allowed his barons to pay "scutage" or shield-money to him instead of fighting themselves. Then he hired soldiers who would stay with him as long as he paid them, and who were much easier to manage than his proud barons.

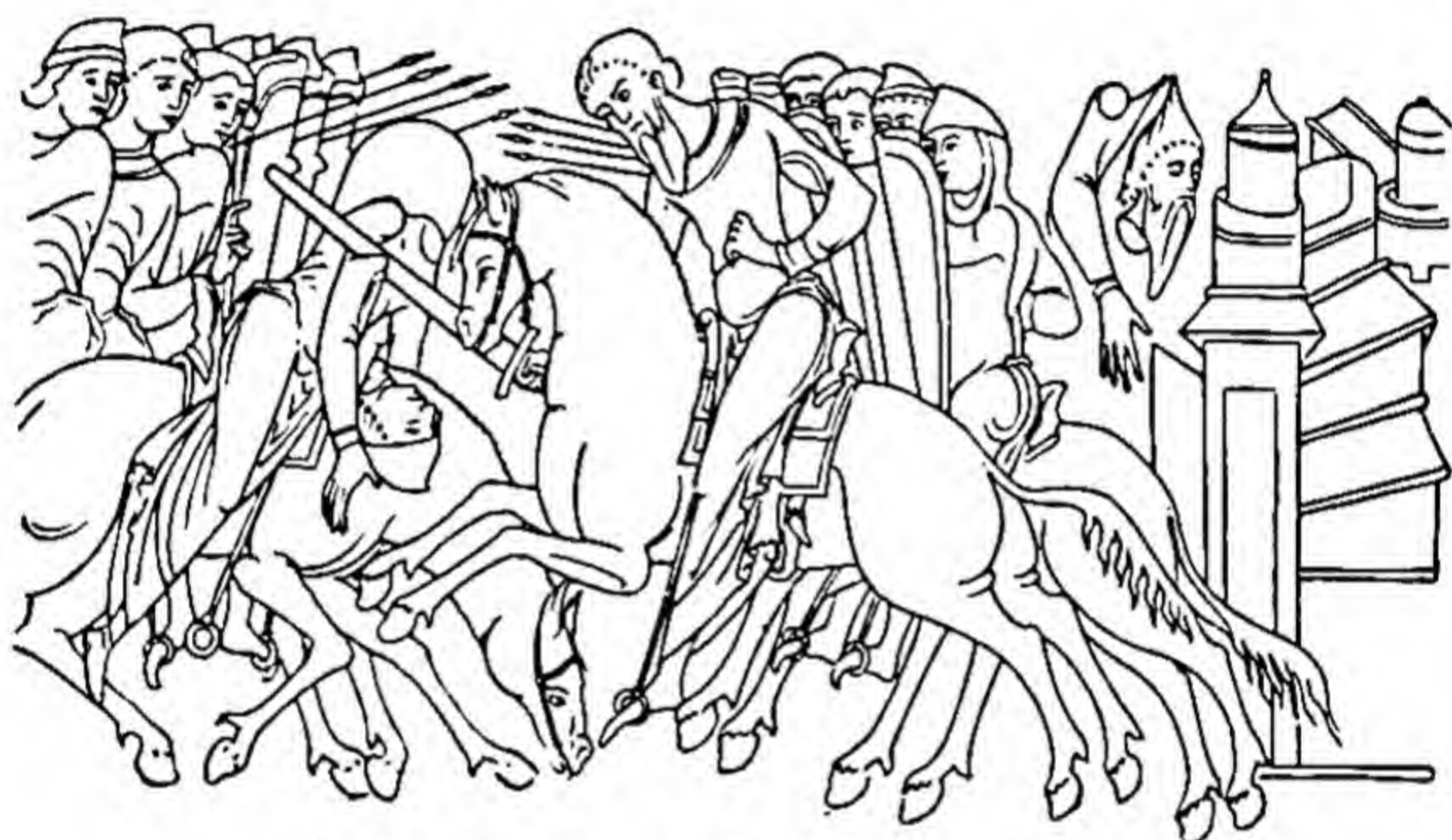
Henry II. also revived the old Saxon "fyrd" or militia of foot-soldiers,\* who could be called out in time of need, but could not be sent abroad. He did this by the "Assize of Arms" (1181), which laid down that each freeman, according to his rank, should appear in arms to be inspected by the judges once a year : the knight or squire had to appear in helmet and mail-coat with shield and lance ; the yeoman in

\* See Chapter 3.



hauberk (coat of mail) and iron headpiece with lance; the burgher or townsman in wadded coat and headpiece with lance. This home army sometimes proved very useful against rebellious barons.

But perhaps Henry II.'s greatest ambition was to secure that every one of his subjects should be able to get justice. The great barons had been accustomed



Mounted soldiers of the time of Henry II.

*(From a Vulgate Bible at Winchester.)*

to hold their own courts. A baron like Hugh the Wolf, Earl of Chester, thus acted as judge on his own big estate. But supposing a tenant of Hugh's had a complaint against the great earl himself. Where could he look for justice? In Stephen's days, nowhere. But Henry II. revived a plan, started by Henry I., of sending three times a year his own judges from his Court at Westminster to travel round the country, and to hold courts in the county town and do justice. These courts are still held, and they are still called

the Assizes (or "sittings" of the judges). The king's judges feared no baron, however great.

But it was when Henry II. tried to bring the clergy under the same system of justice that his troubles began. The clergy had their own courts. In these were tried all cases that came under Canon or Church Law, such as cases about marriages, wills, breaking of promises or contracts. These courts tried all men who were in holy orders, *i.e.* not only the clergy (as we to-day understand the word), but many others who were connected with a church, and many men whom we should now call clerks, whose business was writing reports or keeping accounts. In fact, clerk, or clergyman, or cleric is the same word.

William I. had started these Church courts, where the bishop acted as judge, and in doing so he pleased the great Pope Hildebrand very much. The worst punishment that the Church courts could inflict was to "unfrock" a priest, that is, turn him into a layman again. Then, if he committed a second robbery or murder, he could be punished in the ordinary courts.

Henry II. now looked for an archbishop who would help him to make the clergy submit to the same punishments for crime as other people.

## 10. Henry II. and the Story of Becket

### *The Murder of Becket (1170)*

#### § 1

THOMAS BECKET was the son of a London merchant. He received a good education, and was brought up in the household of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He



was a slight, pale man, with dark hair and a keen, merry face, and everybody liked him. He was clever, with a good memory both for persons and things. He became Archdeacon of Canterbury, and then

Henry II. made him his Chancellor or chief minister.

As Chancellor, Becket helped the king in all his work, and they were firm friends, rode, hunted and feasted together, played chess and joked together, and seemed to have but one mind in all things.

But when Henry II. decided to appoint his friend Archbishop of Canterbury, Becket protested—"Our friendship will turn to hate," he told the king.

And as soon as he was consecrated archbishop, Becket changed his whole way of life. His well-filled table now provided sumptuous feasts only for the poor, while he himself lived on bread and water. Under his still costly robes he wore a hair shirt. He spent long hours of the day and night in prayer, and often slept



St. Thomas of Canterbury and his secretary.

(MS. Trinity College, Cambridge, B.V. 4.)

on the hard floor instead of between the silken sheets provided for him.

“There was no one acquainted with this secret of his way of living, with the exception of Robert, canon of Merton, his chaplain . . . and Brun, who had charge of his sackcloth garments.”

Becket soon showed himself as stiff as Hildebrand in upholding the dignity and rights of the Church. Constant quarrels broke out between him and the king, but especially about the trial of the clergy in the Church courts. At last Becket agreed to some rules called the Customs or *Constitutions of Clarendon*, which had been drawn up by the king's orders. These “Customs” stated that a cleric was to be tried first in the Church courts: if found guilty he was to be unfrocked, and then handed over straightway to the king's courts to receive his punishment.

Then Becket refused to accept the “Customs.” The king in a rage summoned him to a council at Northampton. Becket entered holding up a cross as a symbol of defiance. There was a stormy scene. Becket lost his temper, and behaved so violently that the Bishop of London called him a fool to his face. He was questioned about 30,000 lb. of silver he had received when Chancellor, but he answered that he had already rendered account of this. He defied the king's officers who tried to seize him, and escaped the same night to France.

For six years he remained abroad, carrying on by letters his quarrels with Henry II. The King of France begged Henry to end this scandal to the Church, and allow Becket to return to Canterbury. The Pope scolded Henry, who wrote back:



"Father, your serenity knows full well how I and my whole kingdom have been troubled and injured by that enemy of mine, Thomas of Canterbury, though my conscience does not reproach me with having done anything to deserve it. . . . I have . . . on all occasions been ready to abide by a fair trial in the face of the Church, and if I have done the least wrong,



Thomas Becket arguing with Henry II. and King Louis of France.

*(From a French life of Becket.)*

which I cannot call to mind I have done, to make atonement for it as is reasonable. . . . I entreat you most earnestly to annul what my enemy, Thomas, has done illegally against my people, clerks and laymen, of my kingdom..."

At last a peace was patched up; and Becket returned to Canterbury (1170). Unluckily, he found that Henry had just caused his eldest son to be crowned, as

heir to the throne, by the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London in his absence. Becket declared he was the proper person to perform the ceremony, and he excommunicated those bishops, *i.e.* cut them off from communion with the Church, which was an extreme penalty.

The bishops complained bitterly to King Henry, who was busy in France. Henry lost all patience, flew into one of his violent tempers, and exclaimed, "Are





### AN ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

This picture shows the full dress which would be worn by Thomas Becket as Archbishop, though the artist intended it as a portrait of St. Dunstan, who was Archbishop in the 10th century. Note the "pallium" of white wool round the shoulders, with a strip hanging down in front. Another strip hangs down behind.

(J. Strutt: "Dresses and Habits of the People of England" (1842-43); from illuminated MSS. in the Bodleian Museum.)



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there none of the dastards eating my bread who will rid me of this turbulent priest ? ”

## § 2

Four knights who heard him, and had an old grudge against Becket, took him at his word. In secret they hurried across the Channel and rode to Canterbury. It was four days after Christmas, and Becket, with some of the monks, was singing evensong in the cathedral. Rumours of danger reached them. The monks wished to bolt the doors, but Becket proudly said, “ It is not meet to make a fortress of the house of prayer . . . and we shall triumph over the enemy rather in suffering than in fighting, for we came to suffer, not to resist.”

Then the knights rushed in with drawn swords, shouting, “ Where is the traitor ? ” “ Here am I,” answered Becket calmly, as he descended the altar steps, “ no traitor, but a priest of God.”

With angry words the knights fell upon him. All the monks had fled but one, whose arm was nearly cut through as he tried to save his master. Then Becket bowed his head as one that prays, uttering these last words : “ To God and to blessed Mary, and to the Saints that watch over this Church, and to the blessed St. Denis, I commend myself and the cause of the Church.”

Every one was horrified and dismayed when they heard of the murder of the archbishop. The cathedral was closed for a year, and it was not opened till after a solemn purification arranged by the Pope. Becket was buried as a martyr. Soon people were flocking to



his tomb to do honour to a saint. Henry II. himself was sincerely aghast at the terrible deed—"For three days he would eat nought, nor speak with any."

Then he did penance at Becket's tomb. "As soon as he was in sight of the church in which the body of the blessed martyr lay buried, he dismounted from the horse on which he rode, took off his shoes, and barefoot and clad in woollen garments, walked three miles to the tomb of the blessed martyr," and there suffered himself to be scourged with whips by the monks.

He dared not interfere again with the Church courts ; and they continued to do their work for three hundred years.

Henry II.'s last years were full of trouble. His vast lands in France were a great burden to him, for his sons were constantly stirring up rebellions against him, and plotting who should have the crown at his death. Two of his sons, Richard and John, were actually fighting against their father during his last illness. When he saw the name of his favourite son John on the list of the rebels, he said, "Let all the rest go as it will ; I care no more for myself and the world."

## 11. Irish Chiefs and Norman Barons

THE King of England was not yet King of Wales, nor of Scotland, nor of Ireland. The only Englishman who was ever made Pope—Adrian IV.—granted to Henry II. a licence to conquer Ireland, on condition that he did homage to the Pope for it. But Henry did not agree to these terms.

Soon after, Dermot, one of the Irish chiefs who were always fighting among themselves, was driven

from his "kingdom," and came to Henry II. for help. Henry II. was too busy to interfere, but he gave Dermot permission to seek help from any of his barons who cared for the adventure. Dermot persuaded Richard, Earl of Pembroke, usually nicknamed Strongbow, and a number of Norman knights, to go back with him to Ireland.

"As to the Earl Strongbow's portrait, his complexion was somewhat ruddy, and his skin freckled, he had grey eyes, feminine features, a weak voice, and a short neck. For the rest, he was tall in stature, and a man of generous and courteous manner."

The mail-clad Norman barons and their men were more than a match for the half-naked Irish warriors. Strongbow soon reconquered Dermot's lands, married his daughter, and seemed in a fair way to making himself king over all Ireland.

Then Henry II. thought it was time to interfere : so he visited Ireland the next year, and received the homage of the Norman barons and a good many Irish chiefs. Satisfied with this, he soon departed, calling himself "Lord of Ireland."

But the real authority and influence of the Normans never spread beyond the Pale, a small district round Dublin and Wexford. Beyond the Pale, the Irish chiefs quarrelled and fought as of old ; and the Normans also spent much of their time in fighting, becoming in time more Irish than the Irish themselves.

A famous Welsh chronicler gives this rather unkind \*

\* Not only unkind but ignorant, for Ireland had been highly civilized when society in England was very rude and rough indeed, and had upheld Christianity for many generations before Augustine preached it in Kent in 597.



account of the Irish people in Henry II.'s reign. It shows how much more backward many of them were than the English of the same period :

“The Irish are a rude people, subsisting on the produce of their cattle only, and living themselves like beasts. They . . . lead the same life as their fathers did in the woods and open pastures, neither willing to abandon their old habits nor to learn anything new.



An Irish chalice of the 10th to 11th centuries.

*(In silver, exquisitely ornamented with gold repoussé and filigree work, and a remarkable proof of early culture in Ireland.)*

They therefore only make patches of tillage . . . there is scarcely any land sown. . . . Very few sorts of fruit trees are found in the country . . . for the lazy husbandman does not take the trouble to plant the foreign sorts which would grow very well here. . . . They never employ themselves in the manufacture of flax or wool, or in any kind of trade or mechanical art. . . . This people . . . is truly barbarous, being not only barbarous in their dress, but suffering their hair and beards to grow enormously in an uncouth manner.”

## 12. The Crusades

### § 1

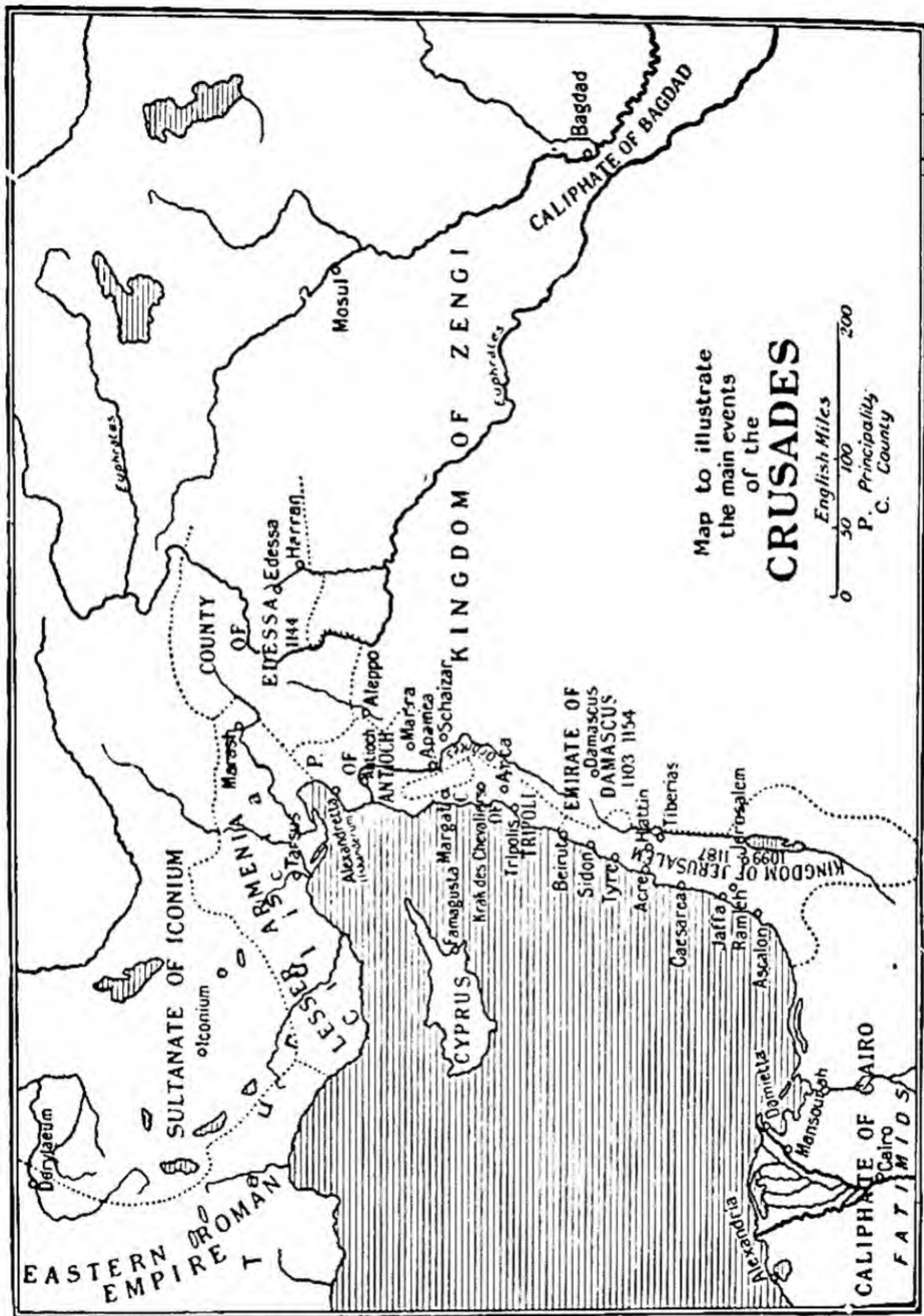
IN the year 1096—while William the Conqueror's greedy and cruel son, William Rufus, was misruling England—one could have seen riding on an ass through parts of France and Germany, a man in ragged clothing, barefoot, with sunken, burning eyes, and haggard cheeks scarred by much suffering. He was called Peter the Hermit.

Many pilgrims had made the long and difficult journey to Palestine to worship at the Holy Sepulchre and visit the scenes of our Lord's life. The pilgrim carried a staff in his hand and usually wore a long rough gown with a hood, and a wide-brimmed straw hat. Men respected the pilgrims for their piety, and welcomed them for the tales they could tell about Eastern life and manners.

Peter the Hermit was an eloquent preacher, and drew a vivid picture of the sufferings of the pilgrims. He called on every one to avenge the cruelties inflicted on him and his fellow-pilgrims by the Turks in Jerusalem.

Now the Holy Land, with its capital Jerusalem, had been part of the old Roman Empire, until it was conquered (A.D. 635) by the followers of the Arab prophet Mohammed. His followers believed in one God, and their religion taught them to be upright and just in their dealings with one another. But they were not Christians. They had conquered many lands, and they compelled the conquered peoples to adopt their faith. But they did not often interfere with the un-





armed and harmless Christian pilgrims who came every year to worship at the holy places.

Then in the time of our William I. all this was changed. Jerusalem was conquered (1076) from the Arabs by a fiercer and more cruel Mohammedan people. These were the Turks, who had come from Central Asia, and they imprisoned and tortured many of the pilgrims.

Already, in 1095, Europe had been aroused against the Turks. For once, the "two swords," \* Pope and Emperor, were of the same mind. Pope Urban II. called a Great Council at Clermont in France, at which many princes, barons, and other people were present. The Pope made a rousing speech, bidding all men go and fight to deliver the holy places from the defiling hands of the unbelieving Turks.

At once shouts arose : " It is the will of God ! It is the will of God ! " " Yes, it is God's will," answered Urban ; " and to show that you are fighting in a holy war, you shall wear on your shoulders the blood-red sign of Him who died to save your souls. . . . They who die will enter the mansions of Heaven, while the living shall behold the sepulchre of their Lord."

Men of all classes hastened to join this war of the Cross (called a Crusade, from the Latin *crux*=cross). Prisoners were released, serfs made freemen, debtors pardoned, if they would " take the cross." A disorderly rabble of people set off eagerly and without any preparation, and lost their way or perished before they ever reached Palestine. They were followed by a more disciplined army from many countries, led by princes and great barons, like the Norman Godfrey de Bouillon.

\* See Chapter 7, page 47



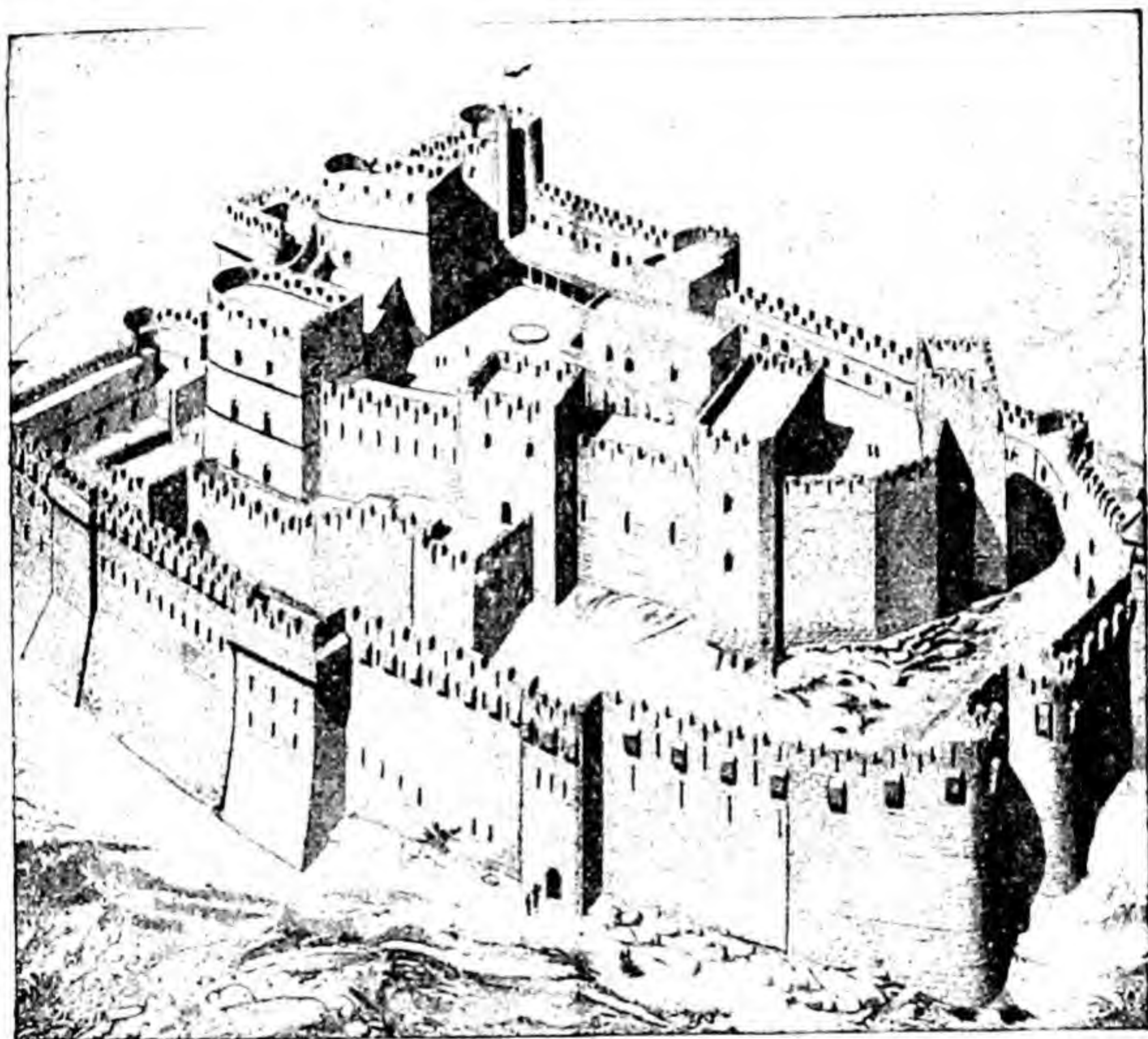


Siege tower and Greek fire (a highly inflammable liquid composition).

(*Viollet-le-Duc: Dict. d'Arch.*, vol. i., p. 365.)



The Crusaders had many difficulties after they reached Palestine. To scale the thick and high walls of Jerusalem many ladders were needed, and wooden



The "Krak des Chevaliers" restored—one of the strong castles of the Knights Templars. (See page 75.)

(G. Rey: *Étude sur les monuments de l'architecture militaire des Croisés* (1871), Plate vii.)

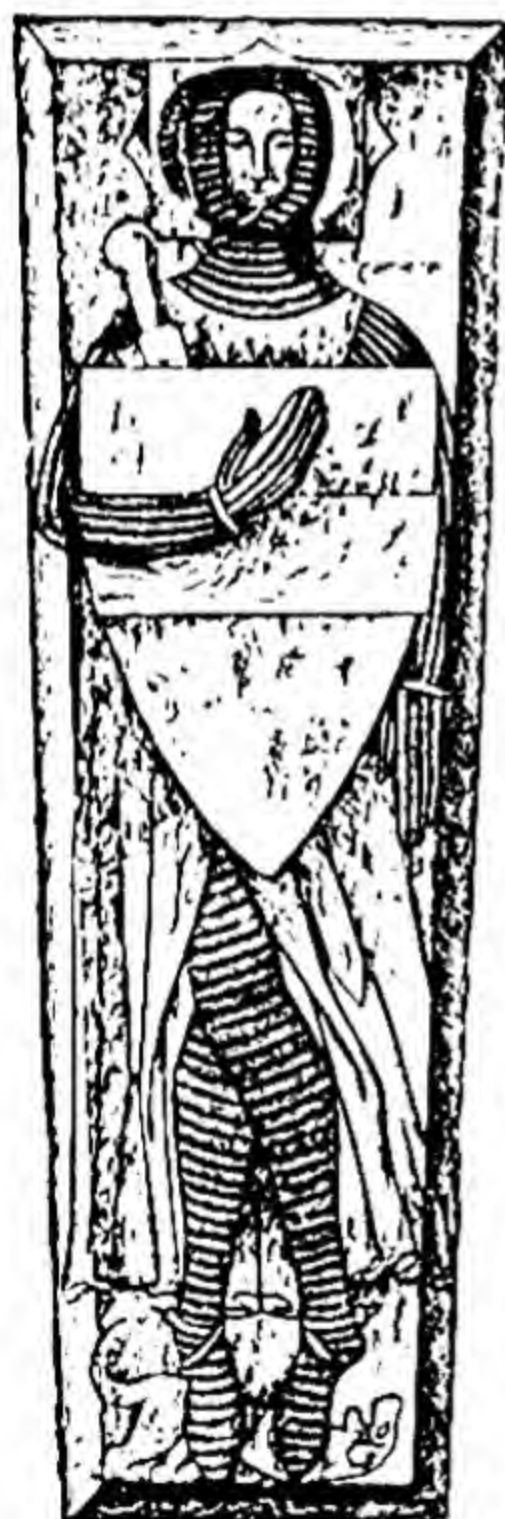
towers from which the soldiers could pour their arrows from behind a screen into the Holy City. All the wood for these had to be fetched from thirty miles away, across the open desert under the blazing sun. Many soldiers fell ill of fever, or from want of fresh water and



provisions. Armies in those days, and for many years to come, always lost more men through sickness than through actual fighting.

## § 2

At last Jerusalem was taken (1099) by the Crusaders after a desperate struggle lasting all through the night. Towards morning a cry was heard, "St. George to the rescue." Men said afterwards that the Saint had actually been seen fighting on the heights alongside the Crusaders. Once inside the walls, the soldiers of the Cross showed no mercy, but slaughtered men, women, and children as pitilessly as they slew the Turks, believing it to be a Christian duty. Then they washed their blood-stained hands and went in white robes to worship at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Crusaders elected Godfrey de Bouillon as their ruler, but he refused the name of king—"I will not wear a golden crown where once my Lord was crowned with thorns."



An early 13th-century knight.

(From a tomb at Bitton church, Somersetshire.)

During the fight many of the wounded were carried to the priory of St. John, where they were nursed with loving care by the monks. And in this way started the Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. They vowed to fight only against the

Saracens (or Easterners), as they called the Turks, and always to succour the sick and poor. Their badge is still worn by the St. John's ambulance men.

The Knights Templars were another Order of soldier-monks, who took their name from the temple at Jerusalem. They gave their whole lives to fighting in the wars of the Cross. Their church in London is still called the Temple Church; and there one may see many tombs with effigies of knights in armour, some with their legs crossed to show that they were Crusaders.

Some of Godfrey's successors were less single-hearted than he was. The last of them died (1186) in our Henry II.'s reign. During a dispute about the succession, the great Mohammedan leader, Saladin, swooped down with a fresh army on the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem and reconquered it (1187).

### 13. A Crusading King—Richard “the Lion-heart”

THE Crusades went on, with intervals, for nearly two hundred years (1095–1291). There were nine Crusades in all. Several of our kings wished to join them; but Richard the Lion-heart was the only reigning king who actually did so.\* William the Conqueror's eldest son, Robert, joined the first Crusade, first selling Normandy to his brother William II., to raise the money he needed. Henry II. longed to go, but was kept too busy by his duties at home. Richard should have been

\* Edward I. was fighting in the Crusades when his father died and he became king (1272).



equally busy, but he loved fighting more than anything in the world.

Richard I. (1189-1199) was a tall, strong, and handsome man, with fair hair and flashing blue eyes. He was indeed as brave as a lion, with the terrible temper of his Angevin family redeemed by bursts of forgiving generosity. He was careless and open-handed with his money, fond of a joke and a song. He was adored by his soldiers, and admired by all the English people, who were proud of his European fame as a gallant knight and a great commander.

Yet he really thought little about his English kingdom, except as a means of raising money for his Crusading expenses. Like many of his barons, he allowed the towns on his estates to buy charters which gave them the right of self-government,\* and this was a good thing for England. He released William of Scotland from his oath of homage in return for 10,000 marks;† and he declared light-heartedly that he would have sold London itself if he could have found a buyer.

Having also sold most of the Crown jewels, and wrung vast sums of money from the Jews, the money-lenders of those days, Richard I. hastened off at the head of a goodly army to the Holy Land. King Philip of France, Duke Leopold of Austria, and the Emperor Barbarossa (or "Red-beard") were also among the leaders. Such a force was expected to retake Jerusalem even from so able a general as Saladin.

But the Christian leaders were always quarrelling who should be first among them. One day when they

\* See Chapter 14, page 82.

† *Mark*, English money of account, 13s. 4d.



Regal costume, early 13th century.

(*Roy. MS. 2 A xxii.*)

were encamped before Jerusalem, Leopold had set up his standard higher than that of Richard, who flew into a passion and sent his servant to tear down the Austrian

Sri Pratap College,  
Erinagar

17481



flag. Such quarrels weakened and disgraced the Christian army. Sickness also broke out in their camp.

Philip went off home offended, to plot with the treacherous John, who had been left by his brother Richard to rule England in his absence. Richard was obliged finally to make a truce with Saladin, by which Jerusalem remained in Mohammedan hands, though the pilgrims were promised that they might visit it unharmed. "O most holy land, may God grant me life to return and deliver thee," cried Richard I. in his sorrow at his unfinished work.

Richard, sick in body and mind, embarked for England. On his way home he was shipwrecked on the coast of Italy. Though disguised, his lavish use of money caused him to be recognized and captured by his enemies, who handed him over to Leopold. The Austrian duke kept him in prison for a long time.

A story is told of his faithful servant, the minstrel Blondel, who wandered throughout Europe seeking news of his master. At last, one day, as he was singing one of Richard's favourite airs on his way past a strongly fortified castle, he was amazed and delighted to hear from a dungeon a well-loved voice joining in the singing. Blondel then hastened to England to procure the enormous sum demanded for the king's ransom. This was raised at great sacrifice, and Richard returned at last to England, but only for a few months.

His last years were spent in France fighting against his rebellious vassals and against King Philip. He was besieging a castle when he was wounded by an arrow. The clumsy doctor failed to extract the arrow, and Richard soon found himself dying from loss of blood.

He sent for the archer, who had been taken prisoner, and asked him—

“What have I done to you that you should kill me?”

“You have slain my father and my brothers and all that belonged to them,” was the reply.

“I forgive you my death,” said the generous king;



Minstrels (reign of Edward I.).

(*Roy. MS. 2 B vii.*)

and with his dying breath bade his servants let the man go free. But after the king's death the wretched man was hanged.

## 14. Results of the Crusades

THE Crusades were not successful in their immediate object, for Jerusalem remained in the hands of the Turks until in the First World War it was recaptured by General Allenby in 1917, and it, with the rest of Palestine, was placed under British mandate.





Doctor and servant (with mortar and pestle),  
13th century.

*(Sloane MS. 1,975.)*

But when the Crusaders held Jerusalem for a time, they never dreamed of inviting the Jews back to their old home. The Jews in every country in

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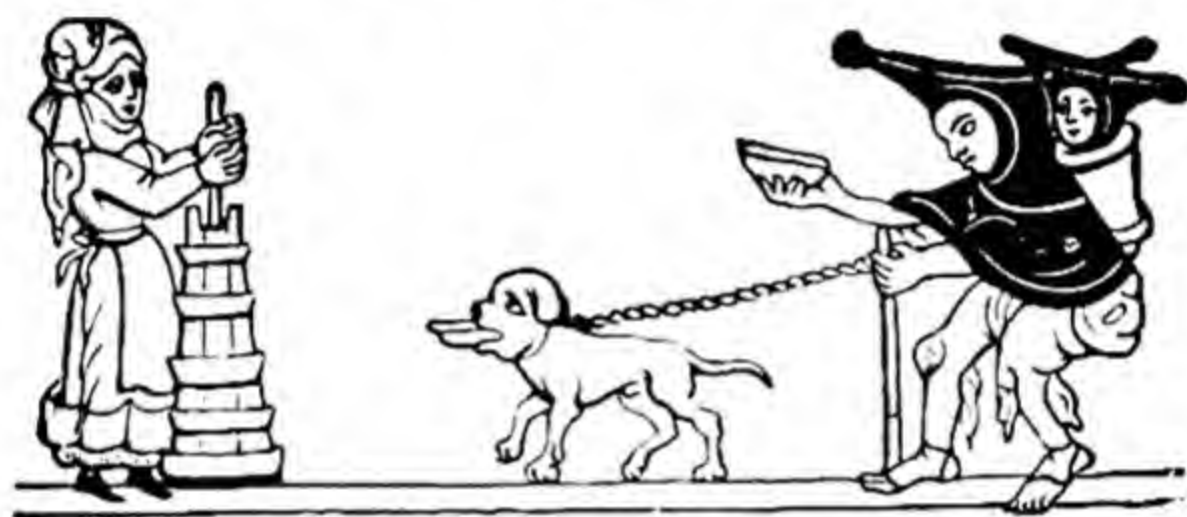


#### CONFERENCE BETWEEN SARACENS AND CRUSADERS.

This illumination represents an event which took place in the year 1270, when Aimar de Brienne, Count of Eu and great chamberlain of France, and his brother Jean de Brienne, summoned of Acre and grand master of France, the sons of Jean de Brienne, King of Jerusalem, who were then near Lyons, were accosted by three Saracen knights proposing baptism. Whilst occupied by them, the Count of Eu and his brother were attacked by the Saracens in force, and sixty Christian

Europe in the Middle Ages were hated and persecuted, and all sorts of absurd rumours were whispered about them. They were not allowed to practise most trades ; they had to live in a special quarter of the town, and wear a special dress with a yellow cap. Some of them made their living by money-lending, because Christians thought it sinful to charge interest on loans.\*

But while the Christians despised and insulted the Jews, and grumbled over their heavy rates of interest,



Milkmaid and beggars.

(From *Add. MSS.* 10,293, A.D. 1316.)

they found it very convenient to make use of them. The English kings took the Jews under their especial protection, for it was almost impossible for a Jew to obtain justice in an ordinary law court ; but the kings took care to wring vast sums of money from them.

An important result of the Crusades was that many Eastern luxuries were introduced into the castles and rude homes of Europe—coffee and spices, silks and muslins and beautiful carpets, ivory and precious stones. Again, the Arabs and Saracens had more knowledge of medicine, mathematics, and other sciences, and even of the fine old Greek books, than

\* " Lend, hoping for nothing again " (*i.e.* in addition). Luke vi. 35.  
(3,410) 6



most of their European enemies; and the more thoughtful Christian knights learned some of these things from Saracen prisoners and Arab books. Thus one great result of the Crusades was the beginning of a revival of learning in Europe.



Costume of the commonalty, Edward II., showing women's headgear, the wimple, and boots of untanned leather.

(From a contemporary MS.)

Another result was that many of the towns in Europe and England seized the chance to buy charters from their overlords when the latter wanted ready money for the wars.

A "charter" was a written document. In writing, the lord bound himself and his successors to allow the town to choose its own officials—such as the mayor, aldermen, controllers of the market, ale-tasters—and to collect its own taxes, instead of having the lord's tax-collector spying into every house to see what each man could afford. Often, too, the townsmen were set free from paying the heavy tolls for the use of roads and bridges leading to the town. The charter was a help to the townsmen, who became more prosperous as time went on.

Thus the Crusades indirectly helped the growth of a middle class in England and elsewhere, and townspeople and merchants became more and more important in the nation as the "feudal system" of overlord and vassal slowly decayed.

**15. The worst King of England—John (1199–1216)**

## § I

KING RICHARD I. of England, called the Lion-heart, was succeeded by his younger brother John. This was the man who had plotted to make himself king in his father's lifetime, and again when his brother, Richard I., was on Crusade. But though he was a very clever man, his reign brought nothing but misery on his people.

He had been a favourite with his father, Henry II., who at one time sent him to rule Ireland. But John made fun of the Irish chiefs, pulling their long beards and mocking their dress, so that they would have none of him ; and he had to be recalled. He was ever afterwards called " Lackland," the prince without an estate.

Some men said, on Richard's death, that little Prince Arthur, son of John's elder brother, Geoffrey, had a better right to the throne. Philip Augustus, King of France, always anxious to weaken his difficult vassal, the King of England, saw his chance. He now turned against John, and fought for Arthur's "rights." John captured Arthur in battle ; and soon afterwards the young prince was cruelly murdered, certainly by John's orders, some said, by his own hand.

Many English nobles were disgusted. Philip, as John's overlord for his French lands, soon swept with his army through Normandy taking all the English castles, while John wasted his time.

Soon all Normandy was lost to England through



his slackness. The English naturally counted this a disgrace, but in the end it proved a good thing for both countries. Normandy was really a part of France ; and John's English vassals, who no longer had castles on both sides of the Channel, began to think more about England. Some of them had

married the descendants of Saxon nobles, and had learned their language. Henceforth we begin to hear less about the "Saxon" and the "Norman" and more about the "English."

Next John made an enemy of the Pope, Innocent III., one of the greatest Popes of the Middle Ages. A new Archbishop of Canterbury was needed. John chose one man, and the monks of Canterbury another. Both men went to Rome to receive from the Pope the pallium—the wool-



Seal of Stephen Langton.

len strip which was the sign of the archbishop's office.\* But Innocent III. set them both aside, and appointed Stephen Langton. John refused to accept him. When some of the bishops came to the king to remonstrate, "he became nearly mad with rage, and broke forth in words of blasphemy. He plainly ordered the bishops to take themselves quickly from his sight if they wished to keep their bodies free from harm."

Then as John still refused to receive Stephen

\* See Plate facing page 64.

Langton, the Pope placed all England under an interdict, so that "all church services . . . ceased to be performed . . . the bodies of the dead, too, were carried out of towns and cities and buried in roads and ditches without prayers or the attendance of priests." John replied in his own way; "religious men and other ordained persons, when found travelling on the road, were dragged from their horses, robbed, and basely ill-treated by the servants of the king, and no one could do them justice."

Next the Pope announced that John was deposed from the throne, and he wrote to Philip of France, "ordering him to undertake this business, and declaring that, after he had expelled the English king from the throne of that kingdom, he and his successors should hold possession of the kingdom of England for ever."

## § 2

At last John was really frightened. He had imprisoned a certain hermit for prophesying that he should lose his crown on Ascension Day, 1213. Now he feared that the prophecy might come true. So he sent for the Pope's legate or messenger, and at Dover he "resigned his crown, with the kingdoms of England and Ireland, into the hands of our lord the Pope," and received them back as the Pope's vassal, doing homage for them. John's subjects were very angry, and muttered that he had indeed lost his crown that day.

But John now had the Pope on his side. His barons were angered past all patience by the murder of Arthur, the loss of Normandy, his greed for money, and his homage to Rome. There were "others whom he



had by unjust exactions reduced to the extreme of poverty ; some whose parents and kindred he had exiled, converting their inheritance to his own uses ;



King John hunting.

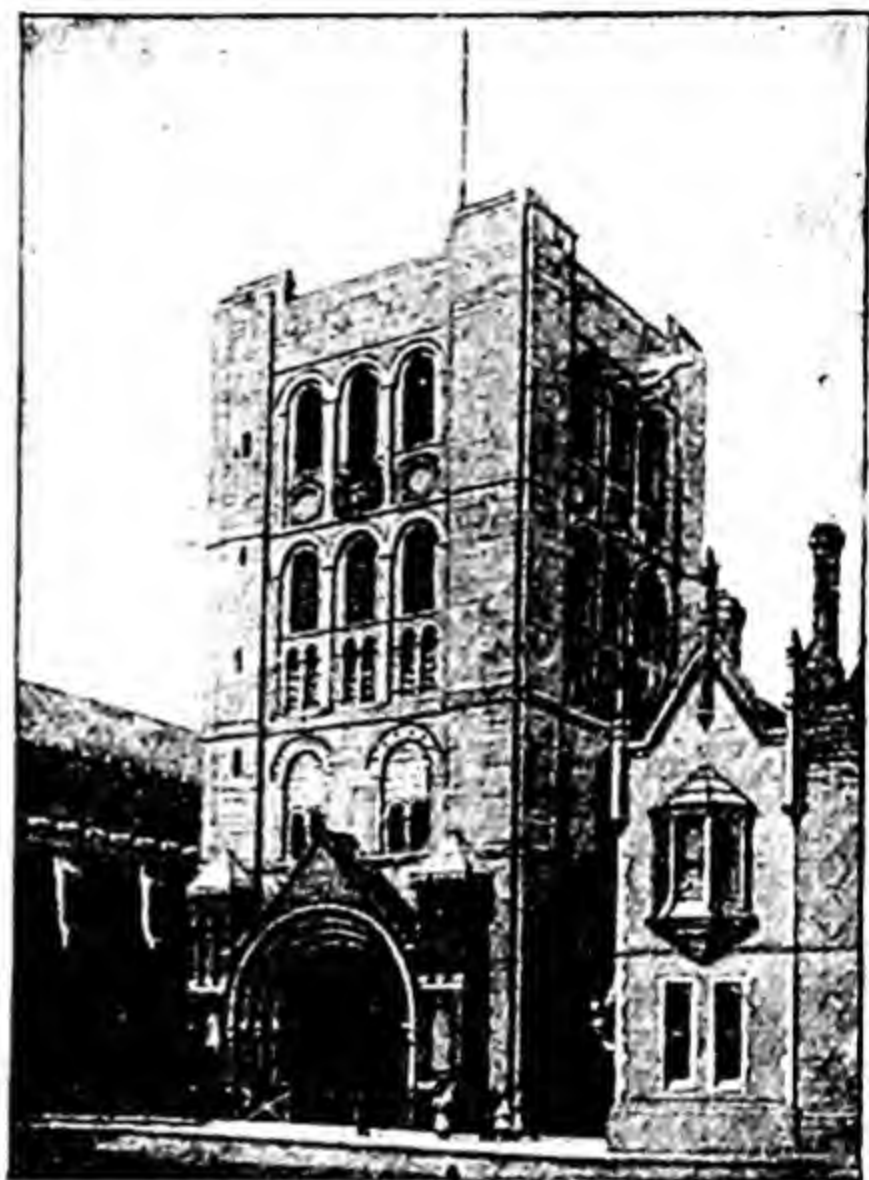
*(From a Forest Charter of the early 14th century. Cotton MS., Claudius D. ii., fol. 113.)*

thus the king's enemies were as numerous as his nobles.

“ Therefore, learning that they were absolved from their allegiance to John, they were much pleased, and if report is to be credited, they sent a paper, sealed with their seals, to the king of the French, telling him that he might safely come to England, take possession of the kingdom, and be crowned with all honour

and dignity." Then the barons consulted with the new archbishop, Stephen Langton. They sent a challenge to John, demanding that he should confirm the ancient laws and "liberties" (or privileges) of the English people and the charter granted by Henry I. Seeing the barons were actually prepared to fight against him, the king gave way.

"The archbishop with his fellow - messengers then carried the paper to the king, and read to him the heads of the paper one by one throughout. The king, when he heard the purport of these heads, derisively said, with the greatest wrath, 'Why, amid these unjust demands, did the barons not ask for my kingdom also?' And at length he angrily declared with an oath that he would never grant them such liberties as would render him their slave."



St. Edmund's Church, St. Edmundsbury, where the barons took the oath.

Finally, however, on the island of Runnymede in the river Thames, John met the barons and sealed the Great Charter on June 15, 1215. This was one of the greatest things that ever happened in English history. It was the first time that the Norman barons acted more like English patriots, joining with an English archbishop and some of the English "commons"



(the Mayor of London was one of them) to resist the king's tyranny.

## 16. The Great Charter, 1215.

Now when the barons drew up the Great Charter they were thinking chiefly of their own rights as feudal vassals. Yet they put in other



William Marshal,  
Earl of Pembroke,  
one of the leading  
barons.

clauses, to which men have ever since looked back as the "foundations of English liberty." All the rest of English history has been different because of Magna Carta (Latin for "The Great Charter").

The first clause said, "The Church of England shall be free," that is, free to elect her bishops, abbots, and high officials without the king's interference, and free to keep all her ancient privileges.

Another famous clause stated, "No money is to be levied (except the three usual feudal aids) without the consent of the Common Council of the Realm."

John had lately been extorting money from his tenants-in-chief on all sorts of occasions. The three feudal aids that were usually paid to a king were: when the tenant's eldest son was knighted, when his eldest daughter was married, and when the king required ransoming (as happened to Richard I.). The "Common Council of the Realm"

at this time meant the meeting of the tenants-in-chief ; later it came to mean Parliament.

It was a great step to lay it down that the Council's consent must be obtained before the king demanded any other taxes. Kings tried to ignore this clause more often than any other, but the tenants-in-chief always called their attention to it. Later on, they began to bargain with the king when they were all together in council ; and they argued that, before they gave him money, he must grant their requests, such as pass some needful law, or dismiss a minister they disliked. In short, they remembered the proverb : " The man that pays the piper calls the tune."

Then there are two famous clauses about justice : " To no man will we sell, deny, or delay justice." " No freeman is to be tried except by his peers (*i.e.* by his equals), and by the law of the land." But this clause did not affect the mass of the people, for they were not " freemen " but " villeins," that is, unfree peasants, little better than slaves.

In many other countries (for example, in France, until about a hundred and fifty years ago) a king might send his officers to seize a man he disliked, cast him into prison without any trial, and keep him there perhaps for life. But henceforth, if an English king tried to do this, men might appeal to the Great Charter.

Among other interesting clauses were these : No man may be deprived of the tools whereby he earns his living ; London is to have all its ancient rights ; and merchants, foreign as well as English, were to come and go freely in the kingdom.

John sealed the Charter with outward calm, but when he had ridden back to his castle at Windsor, he



"commenced gnashing with his teeth, scowling with his eyes, and, seizing sticks and branches of trees, began to gnaw them, and after gnawing them to break them, and with increased vehemence to show the grief, or rather rage, that he felt."



The seal of Robert Fitzwalter,  
the leader of the barons.

Then John got the Pope to say he was not bound by the solemn oath he had just sworn. This greatly amazed the barons, and both sides prepared to fight. The barons in desperation asked the King of France, Philip Augustus, to send his son Louis to take the crown. So

Philip sent Louis, and war raged in England for a year.

Then the whole aspect of affairs was suddenly changed by John's death. He was crossing the Wash with his followers when a sudden storm and flood arose, and his valuable baggage, including the royal crown, was swept away. This last vexation threw John into a fever, he fell ill that night after eating too hearty a supper of peaches and cider, and he died next day—lamented by none.

### 17. Henry III. and the Mad Parliament

WHEN John died, all England heaved a sigh of relief. The barons had no grudge against his little son, now

Henry III., and they plainly told Louis, the son of the French king, that they had now no use for his services, and he might go home forthwith.

Louis did not see things in quite the same light, and some fighting followed. But the French were defeated in a battle in the streets of Lincoln, in which they left so many spoils behind them, and the English won so easy a victory, that the battle was called "The Fair of Lincoln." About the same time the French were also beaten in a sea-fight off the coast of Dover—our first great naval victory. Then Louis took the barons' advice and went home.

Hubert de Burgh, the hero of the Dover sea-fight, ruled wisely and well until Henry was grown up. One of the first things he did was to promise on the young king's behalf that he should keep the Great Charter.

When Hubert was dismissed, and Henry III. began to rule without him, troubles began again. "If John's heart was of millstone, Henry's was of wax."

John was a thoroughly bad king; Henry III. was simply a weak one, who always accepted the advice of those nearest him, and these were generally unwise people. But Henry III. was pious and well-meaning, and he might have done no harm if he had not had the ill-luck to be a king.

He married Eleanor of Provence. This lady was very haughty, and had many poor relatives, some of



Effigy of Henry III., Westminster Abbey.



whom came over with her, looking eagerly for well-paid offices. All the chief posts in Church and State were given to these foreigners. Boniface of Savoy, the queen's uncle, was made Archbishop of Canterbury; though he was very ignorant, a fierce young knight who had learned nothing but war. "One day he entered London, and though the city monasteries were not under his care, he forced his way into St. Bartholomew's, and when the prior courteously declined to acknowledge him as his chief, he struck him in the face with his fist, knocked him down, and trampled on him. A riot followed, and the citizens of London, rising in their rage, drove Boniface and his men out of their gates."

The barons were also much vexed. The king was always asking them for money. Certainly he was poor, for Richard and John had weakened the royal resources, and his wife's relatives were a constant drain on his revenues.

The barons reminded Henry III. of the clause in the Great Charter which said, "No taxes are to be levied without the consent of the Common Council."

Henry ten times solemnly renewed his oath to keep the Charter. "So help me God, these things I will faithfully observe, as I am a man, a Christian, a knight, and a crowned and anointed king." But each time he broke his oath.

One day Henry III. appeared before his Council, leading his little son Edmund by the hand, dressed gaily in Sicilian costume. He announced that the Pope had offered to make Edmund King of Sicily. But he must fight for the island, and king and Pope expected England to furnish the necessary 10,000 marks to pay for an army.

Then the barons' rage knew no bounds. They went to Oxford to what became known as the Mad Parliament, and vowed to drive every foreigner out of the country, and force the king to keep his promises and rule by the help of English ministers whom they could trust.

The foreigners took the hint, and promptly left England. Henry made large promises, and then asked King Louis IX. of France — St. Louis — to judge between him and his barons.

Now Louis IX. was a saintly man, but he was certain to look at this matter from a king's point of view, and he decided that the barons had no right to bind the king by promises which lessened his kingly dignity. So

the foreigners began to creep back. Henry III. levied his unjust taxes again, and very soon things were as bad as ever. The queen was so unpopular that the Londoners hooted her as a witch, and threw lumps of mud on to her barge as it sailed up the Thames. At last the barons decided on war.



St. Louis of France.

(From a wall-painting in the Sainte-Chapelle at Paris.)

## 18. Earl Simon, "The Righteous"

*Simon's Parliament ; Battle of Evesham (1265)*

THE real hero of Henry III.'s reign was Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, called "The Righteous"



by the people. It was curious that he should rise to be the barons' leader, for he was himself a Frenchman. He had, however, married Henry's sister, Eleanor.

He held the great earldom of Leicester, and was now the leading man at Court. He was brave and hand-

some, a wise, good, and upright man, and sincerely religious. He was a great friend of the friars, and also of Robert Grosseteste, the saintly Bishop of Lincoln, whom he made tutor to his sons.

The common people loved him, and used to say :



Simon de Montfort's father.

(From a window in Chartres Cathedral, about 1230.)

"Montfort is he rightly called,  
He is the mount, and he is bold,\*  
And has great chivalry :  
The truth I tell, my troth I plight,  
He hates the wrong, he loves the right,  
So shall have mastery."

He disliked many of the foreigners with whom the king surrounded himself. Of one of these foreigners, a chronicler † wrote : " This same chaplain, a Poitevin (*i.e.* from Poitou, western France) by birth, utterly ignorant alike in manners and learning, we have seen pelting the king, his brother, and other nobles, whilst walking in the orchard of St. Alban's, with turf, stones, and green apples, and pressing the juice of unripe grapes in their eyes, like a lunatic."

The favourites, on their part, hated and envied

\* French *mont* = mountain ; *fort* = strong or bold.

† Matthew Paris.

Simon. So it came about that at last Simon led the barons' army against his brother-in-law the king, and he won a great victory over the king at Lewes in Sussex (1264). Here he captured both Henry III. himself and his eldest son Edward. It was Prince Edward



Young girls, 13th century.

(*Sloane MS. 3,983.*)

who had really lost the battle. He was so angry with the London soldiers for insulting his mother that he chased them off the field of battle for many miles, and so got separated from his father's army.

Simon released the king, but kept Edward as a hostage. Then he summoned a Parliament (1265) to decide how the kingdom was to be governed. Because he knew the townspeople supported him, he summoned



not only barons and knights, but also—for the first time in history—two men from each of those towns which were on his side. This Parliament appointed a committee of barons to govern instead of the king.

But now the tide turned. Simon was too masterful to please some of his own followers, who were offended and went over to the king's side. Prince Edward escaped by a trick. Then he gathered an army together and caught Simon's forces in a curve of the river Avon near Evesham (1265), and defeated them utterly. Simon saw from the way he managed his troops that young Prince Edward had learned from him the art of war. "God have mercy on our souls, for our bodies are the enemy's!" he exclaimed; and he was killed in the battle.

The last years of Henry III.'s reign were peaceful. He died in 1272, and the prince succeeded him as Edward I., and proved one of the best kings England ever had.

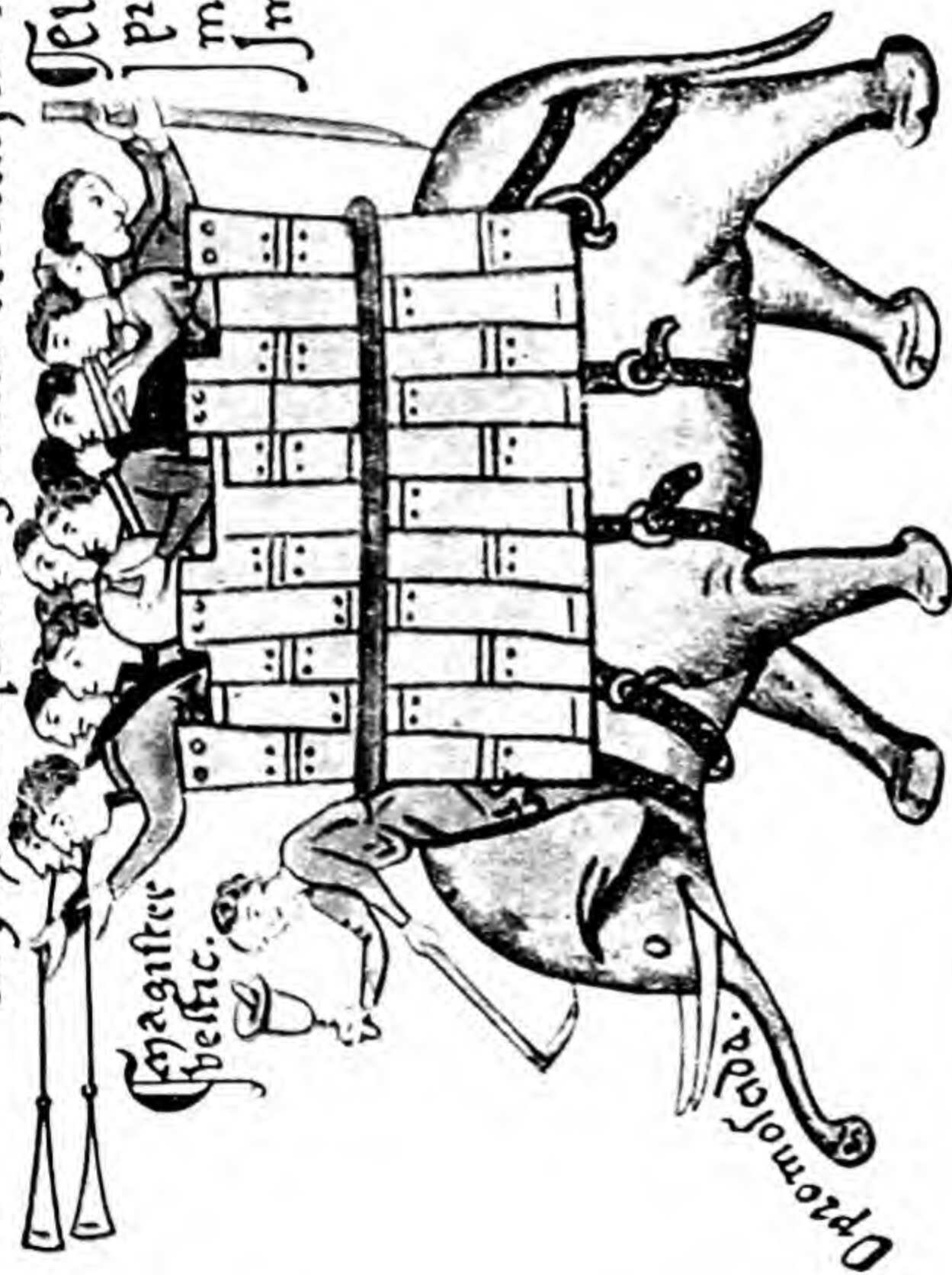
### 19. Another Crusader—St. Louis of France

OUR Crusading king, Richard the Lion-heart,\* though he was what Englishmen to-day would call a good sportsman, was neither a saint nor a good king. But there was one great Crusader who was both. This was King Louis IX., generally known as St. Louis (1226-1270), who was King of France about the same time as Henry III. was reigning in England.

Louis owed much to his mother, the saintly Blanche of Castile. She sent him, as the custom was, to be trained as a page in the house of a great lady of

\* See Chapter 13.

est groyen. Si q'or saginant redditi ad iarracend  
 Stephas cren  
 procedent obi  
 mit Ricardo  
 Imperatoru



# THE RECEPTION OF A CRUSADER.

Richard, Earl of Cornwall, the second son of King John and nephew of Richard Coeur de Lion, fought bravely and successfully in Palestine, 1201. At Cremona, in North Italy, at a reception given to the Crusader, there was a band of music on an elephant. The band is on a wooden structure secured by girths, and includes two trumpeters, a drummer, and a man playing on a double pipe. A man at the back is cruelly goading the elephant, and the driver, ringing a bell, is also holding a goad.

(Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 16, folio 151b; 13th century.)



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France. When the little boy of seven arrived, the lady said to him, "Where did your mother kiss you last?" "Here, on my forehead," said the child. Then replied she, "Let me kiss you there, too, where a saint's lips have been."

The lady was kind and considerate to her pages, but she was also very strict with them. More than one



Princes playing chess.

*(From an early 14th-century MS.)*

whipping did little Louis get, like the other pages, when he did not know his Latin grammar. But most of a page's education was not book-learning. He was taught to wait at table, to play chess with the ladies, to be courteous and gentle, to say his prayers and honour the Church. He also learnt to be a good sportsman: racing, jumping, boxing, wrestling, riding, were all part of the training of these future knights, and it was a point of honour with them to take all hard knocks and tumbles without complaint.



When the boy was fourteen, he was allowed to become a squire. The squire was the personal attendant of a knight; he had to groom and feed his horses, polish his armour and his weapons, and ride with him into battle, ready to hand him a new sword or spear if he broke one in conflict. If his master was wounded, it was the squire's business to remove him from the field and stanch his wounds. Most boys therefore early got a taste of real fighting. When there were no real wars in progress, the knights used to keep in training by holding sham battles, called tournaments.

When the youth reached the age of twenty-one, if he was of gentle birth and had proved himself worthy of the honour, he was made a knight. This was a very solemn ceremony. All through the long hours of the night before, the youth knelt before the altar of his church, keeping vigil alone beside his new armour, consecrating himself for the vow he was to take on the morrow—"to defend the faith, to protect and help the distressed, and to be faithful to his brother knights."

Next day he kneeled before the king, or his overlord, who struck him lightly on the shoulder with the flat of his sword, saying, "In the name of God, and St. Denis of France (or St. George of England), I dub you knight. Be brave, hardy, and loyal."

Then his armour was buckled on, and his sword girt about him by the lady of his choice, and his spurs fastened to his shoes, for a knight generally rode on horseback.

Hence we get the word "chivalry"—from *cheval*, the French word for horse—meaning the ideals of knight-hood. These ideals were that a man should be brave and honourable in all his dealings, ever ready to help



A Young Knight.

(British Museum, Royal MS. 2 A. xxii., folio 220. Drawing attributed to Matthew Paris.)

Crusader or Hospitaller, wearing a round coif and a hauberk and chausses of mail, ailettes in form of a cross, a sleeveless surcoat adorned with crosses, chausses (with metal bosses) laced behind over the calf, and plain goad-like spurs. His lance rests against his shoulder. His head is bowed, as if in reverence to the king, and his cheeks (in the original) are fair and touched with red. Behind him his horse steps out of a gateway, and from the battlements above a page holds out his helmet, which has a crown-like top and two pendent laces. The nails in the horse's shoe are shown.



women and the weak and distressed, loyal to his overlord, a defender of the Christian faith, and never mean or ungenerous even towards his foes. At its best, chivalry was a splendid ideal ; but the knights did not always live up to it, and they were apt to act chivalrously only towards people of their own class.

All his life King Louis strove to take his knightly vow seriously. His father died when he was still a boy, and his mother brought him home to be king. She trained him well, making him realize from the first that to be a good king he must work harder than any of his subjects. He spent long hours every day studying the business of his kingdom, seeing men who came to him with petitions, trying in all things to do justice as a king should. He travelled about the kingdom with his mother, to see for himself how his subjects were being governed ; and in every place they visited they were strict in attending the church services.

His mother was so devout and religious indeed, that one might have expected Louis to turn out more of a saint than a king. Yet his first act when he was grown up, and became king in fact as well as name, was to refuse to grant the request of a bishop, who came to him with a grievance, until he had thoroughly examined both sides of the question.

For many years Louis meant to go on Crusade, but he would not allow himself to do so until he had got his kingdom in order. Then he set sail to fight the Saracens in Egypt. This was the fifth Crusade, and he shared all the hardships of his men, being utterly unselfish and beloved by all his followers. Once his favourite servant was lying very ill and was heard to groan : " I cannot die till I have beheld my holy

master." Louis at once left his business in the next room, and, running to the man's bedside, clasped him in his arms.

But the Crusaders in Egypt were taken unawares by the Nile floods. They lost many battles, and Louis was taken prisoner. The Saracens ill-treated him, and



Louis IX. of France.

(*Corpus Christi College, Cambridge: MS. 16, folio 182 (13th century). Drawing attributed to Matthew Paris.*)

The King is dangerously ill. He rests, crowned, on an oblong pillow, with eyes closed. The Queen touches his forehead with the top of the double cross. The Bishop (of Paris) raises his arm in blessing. After his recovery the King "took the Cross," i.e. went on a Crusade.

tormented him to make him change his faith ; but the Christian king stood firm as a rock. When at last the terms of ransom were arranged, Louis complained of the large sum needed for his own ransom, which would mean a severe burden on his poor people at home, but he agreed without a murmur to the ransoms for his nobles. "The King of France," he said, "must not haggle over the freedom of his subjects."



Having failed to reach the Holy Land, he died eventually in Carthage, beloved and lamented by all his subjects.

## 20. St. Francis—"The Minstrel of God"

It was in Henry III.'s reign that the friars came to England. The friars were followers of St. Francis, who was a rich merchant's son, born at Assisi, near Florence, in Italy (1182). In his youth he was gay, extravagant, pleasure-loving, and rather spoilt. Then he had a long and dangerous illness, in which he began seriously to think about God. He felt that God had a special work for him to do, yet for a long time he could not be sure what that work was. He began by visiting the lepers and bandaging their sores, a dreadful form of nursing from which most people would shrink.

There was a tiny ruined and deserted church on the hillside near his home where Francis used to go and pray by himself. One day he thought he heard God telling him to "rebuild My Church." Overjoyed at what he thought was a clear message at last, he hurried home to get the money to pay for the rebuilding. His father was busy trading away from home, so Francis, forgetting the proverb, "Be just before you are generous," cheerfully sold two bales of his father's cloth to start his building fund.

His father came home and naturally was angry. There were stormy scenes, and Francis's father actually haled him before the bishop, and disowned him because of his disobedience. Then Francis stripped off even

the clothing he owed to his father. Picking up an old piece of cloth, he chalked it with the sign of the cross, and wrapping this round his shoulders, he went out before them all into the wilds.

He began to see a deeper meaning in the command : "Rebuild My Church," He did not seek followers, but many came of their own accord to the cave on the hillside where he lived "with his bride, the Lady Poverty"—a cheerful beggar, determined to bring back the Church to the love and the poverty which Christ taught on earth.

"When thou seest a poor man," said Francis, "thou oughtest to consider Him in whose name he cometh, namely, Christ . . . who took our infirmity and poverty on Him. . . ."

Soon his followers, called friars, which means "brothers," were numbered by thousands, so that they had to be formed into a society or Order, and rules made for them. They went out through all the countries of Europe and even beyond, and were a mighty power for good.

Many stories were told of St. Francis, of his love for all men, and for the birds and beasts as well. Some of these no doubt are exaggerated, but they show us the kind of man he was, and what his friends thought about him. "One day he lifted up his eyes and beheld some trees by the wayside, whereon were an infinite multitude of birds ; so that he marvelled and said to his companions, 'Tarry here for me by the way and I will go and preach to my little sisters, the birds.' And he entered into the field and began to preach to the birds that were on the ground, and those that were in the trees flew down to hear him, and all stood still





St. Francis and the Birds, by Giotto.

(The original is in the Vatican.)



while St. Francis made an end to his sermon ; and even then they departed not till he had given them his blessing."

He was a wonderful preacher. "He treated his theme so well and wisely that many learned men who were present stood filled with admiration when they heard such words from the lips of an untutored man. The whole matter of his discourse was directed to the quenching of hatred and the making of peace. His dress was mean, his person insignificant, his face without beauty. But with so much power did God inspire his words that many noble families, rent apart by ancient blood feuds, became friends for ever." \*

He died rather young, worn out by the hardships he had inflicted on "Brother Ass," as he jokingly called his body, and by his labours for others. Yet he died rejoicing that he "had kept faith with his Lady Poverty unto the end."

Those of his followers who could not devote themselves entirely to the life of a friar, yet wished to observe its spirit while living in the world, became "Penitents."

"The Penitent vowed to restore all ill-gotten gain, to make peace with his enemies, to live in concord with all men, to pass his life in prayer and works of charity, to keep certain fasts and vigils, to pay tithes regularly to the Church, to take no oath, never to wear arms, to use no foul language, and to show piety to the dead."

But many other men gave up everything to devote themselves entirely to a life of poverty, following the example of St. Francis. They were called the Friars

\* Thomas of Spalato.



Minor, "little brothers," or Franciscan Friars, or again Grey Friars, because they wore gowns made of coarse grey cloth.

### 21. The Good Work of the Friars

IN the early years of Henry III.'s reign, a set of foreigners, very different from the king's greedy relatives, began to come to these shores. No man bade these strangers begone : all men loved them, for they came, not to get, but to give.

These men were the Franciscan Friars. They were men dressed in a rough grey gown and hood, girded with a cord like the monks, and shod with sandals.



Franciscan Friar.

But, unlike the monks, they did not live apart from the world in monasteries, but wandered homeless through the countryside and into the towns, seeking everywhere what good they could do. In those days there was much misery among the poor, especially in the towns. Their hovels were huddled together in fearful slums ; there were no drains and no pure water supply.

When disease broke out, as it often did, the people died in hundreds. The doctors were very ignorant, and there were few hospitals. In many of the growing towns epidemics never ceased.

Among these poor, neglected people the friars lived and worked, nursing the sick, teaching the children, working for the infirm, rebuking the evil-doers, and comforting the sorrowful. To the poor people they seemed like angels.

They had no houses and no money ; but their poor neighbours whom they helped, gladly shared a crust of bread with them and let them sleep on the straw which was their own bed. The friars would often help a man with his day's work, but they never took money for it. Yet they were the most cheerful people on earth, and used to sing as they walked by twos and threes along the muddy country lanes, or through the filthy alleys of the towns.

About the same time that the grey-robed figures began to be well known and well loved in our English streets, other friars in black robes and cowls appeared. These also lived and worked among the poor, and begged their bread, but their especial work was preaching. These were the Black or Dominican Friars, followers of St. Dominic.

This St. Dominic was born in Spain, and lived about the same time as St. Francis. His country was still partly inhabited by Mohammedans or Moors. There were also many Jews in the country ; and " heresies "—or false teachings—sprang up within the Christian



Dominican Friar.

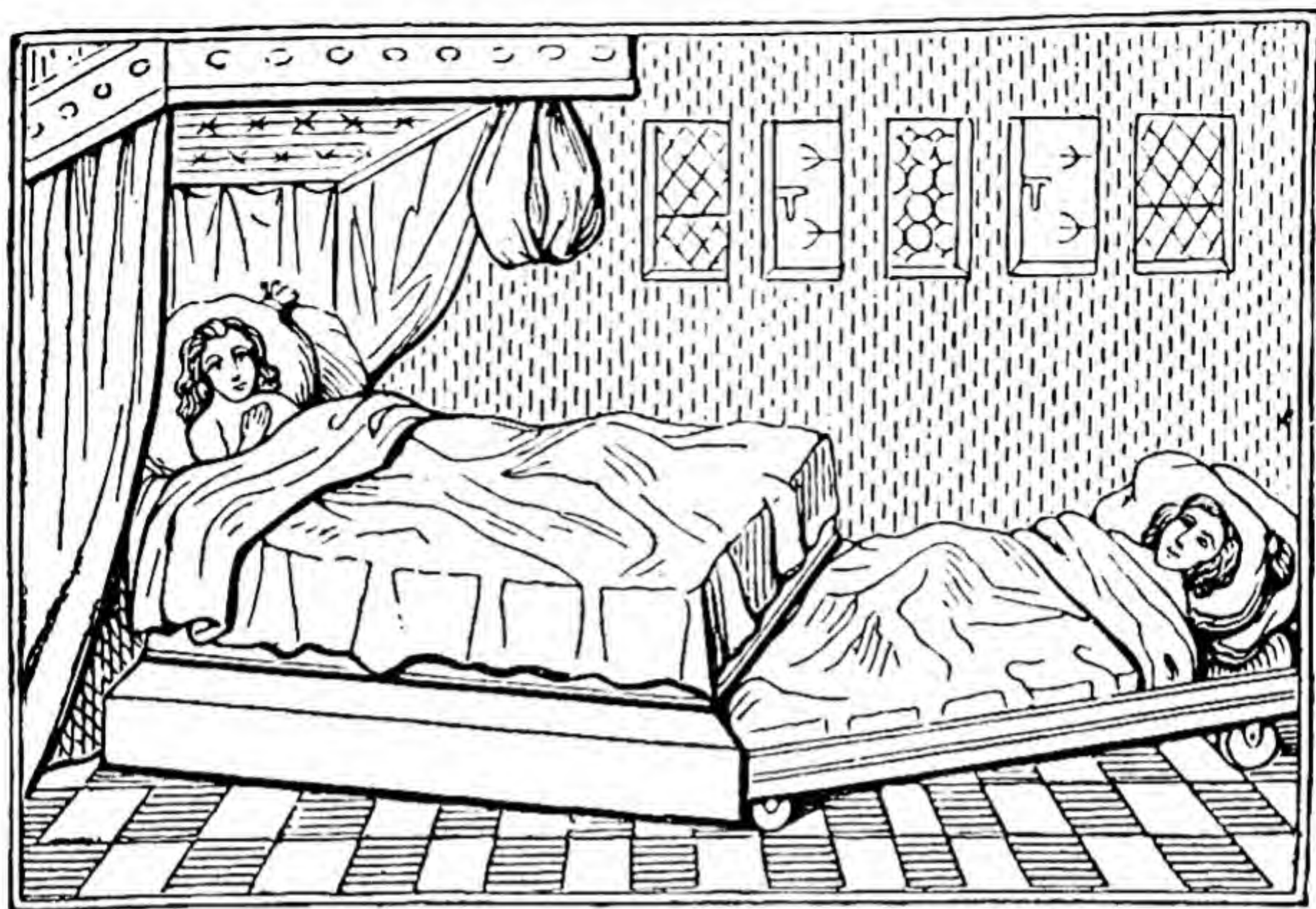


Church itself. Dominic had been a thoughtful student at the university of Valencia from the age of fifteen to twenty-five, and it was natural that he should be impressed with the importance of sound Christian teaching and preaching. This work, as he saw with sorrow, the clergy too often neglected.

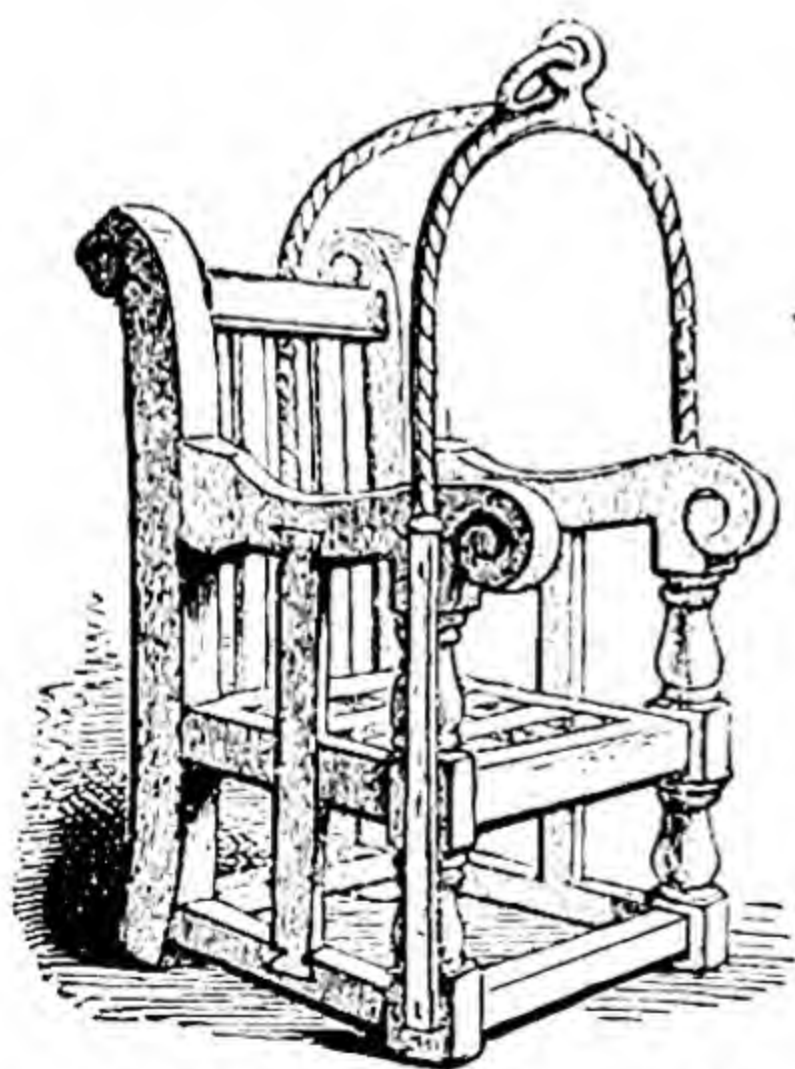
He was once travelling in a part of France where there were many heretics, and he boldly rebuked the Pope's messengers, who were returning to Rome after a vain struggle with the false teaching. "It is not," he said, "by power and pomp, by cavalcades of retainers and richly houseled palfreys, or by gorgeous apparel that heretics win followers. Zeal must be met by zeal, humility by humility, false sanctity by real sanctity, preaching falsehood by preaching truth."

The rest of St. Dominic's life was devoted to a strenuous fight against "heresy." With the Pope's permission, St. Dominic founded an Order, and preachers were trained and sent forth all over the world. Dominic's own preaching was convincing, his zeal and piety beyond all doubt. But where Francis would use love, Dominic would use force. Heretics who would not change their beliefs were in those days condemned to be burnt alive.

This happened to many hundreds of people in Gascony, under the rule of Simon de Montfort and the influence of St. Dominic; and both these great leaders sincerely thought that such severity was right. The idea was that it was better for a man to lose his life than to "lose his soul."



A "truckle" bed is shown on the right. In such a bed a squire would sleep while the knight slept in the higher and finer bed  
*(From a manuscript of the period.)*



A ducking-stool for scolding women.



A man in the stocks.  
 (Can he sit down?)



## 22. Edward I. and the "Model" Parliament

### The Three Edwards:

Edward I., 1272-1307. Edward II., 1307-1327.

Edward III., 1327-1377. The Model Parliament, 1295.

EDWARD I. was one of our greatest kings. He had a vision of the whole island of "Great Britain" ruled by one king—he won Wales, but he failed to win Scotland.

It was when he was at war with both France and Scotland that he called together what is sometimes known as The Model Parliament (1295). It seems to have been the model upon which future Parliaments were based. Hitherto, when a king wanted money, he had as a rule summoned only his tenants-in-chief, or Great Council. The great baron, Simon de Montfort, had indeed, thirty years earlier, called men to represent the towns, but only from those towns which he knew to be on his side. Edward I. had called together more than one parliament before 1295, but each was different from the Model of that year.

Now to Edward I.'s Model Parliament were summoned all the king's tenants-in-chief—archbishops, bishops, and barons—together with two knights chosen by each shire or county, and also two burgesses from each borough or town. That is, all classes of the people were represented: the feudal barons, the knights or gentlemen, and the new and very important trading class—the burgesses or citizens of the important towns.

This Parliament did not respond to his wishes as well as the king had hoped, for the clergy, supported by the Pope, would not tax themselves for the king's wars.



Edward I. receiving the Bull (or Message) of Pope Boniface VIII

*(From a 13th-century MS. in the British Museum.)*

The Pope forbade the clergy to make contributions for secular purposes except with his permission, probably in order to prevent the revenues of the Church from being used for warlike expeditions. King Edward replied that unless the clergy made a contribution of one-fifth they should be outlawed.



Later, some of the barons refused to lead his army into Gascony in the south of France. Edward I. was desperate, in a hurry, and anxious to raise money. So he ordered the merchants' wool—the main source of England's wealth—to be seized at all the ports and to be sold. With this money to pay his army, and illegally obtained, he hurried off to Flanders to fight the French.

Then his discontented barons met together, and agreed that the king must be made to "confirm the charters." So when Edward came back (1297) he was confronted with a copy of the Great Charter; and he agreed to keep its promises. Edward I. did not lightly give his word, but when given, he kept it—his motto was "Keep troth."

This great king, with the help of his Parliaments, made many good and wise laws. He encouraged foreign merchants to come over to help trade, and to please his people he had all the Jews sent out of England (1290), though he was the poorer by this act.

He was indeed a great king. He knew that he could not prosper in his wars, and rule his land well, without the help of all his people: "What touches all should be approved by all," he once said, "and common dangers should be met by common resistance."

### 23. Edward I. and the "Prince of Wales"

Now Edward I.'s great aim was to make England, Wales, and Scotland into one kingdom, "Great Britain."

Wales had been the refuge of the ancient Britons when they were driven back by the Saxons. The

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JESTERS OF THE PERIOD.

(J. Strutt : *"Dresses and Habits of the People of England"* (1842 ed.): from illuminated MSS. in the British Museum.)

Saxon conquerors gave up trying to chase these Britons out of their wild mountains, where it was hard to pursue them. So the Welsh, like the Swiss, long kept their liberty in their mountain lands. The Saxons went no farther than Cheshire, Shropshire, and Herefordshire, the border lands. They built a great wall against the Britons, called Offa's Dyke (about A.D. 780), and spoke of them as "Welsh," which means strangers or foreigners.

There was indeed seldom any love lost between the small dark-haired Welsh and the tall fair-haired Saxons. The Marches or border lands were constantly troubled by raids. The Welsh, whose only wealth was in their flocks of mountain sheep and cattle, used to swoop



Joan, Princess of North Wales,  
daughter of King John.

down suddenly on the border farms, burn or cut down the corn, and drive off the beasts of the enemy to their own hills. Then the angry Saxons would start to plunder in return, often losing their way among the mists on the Welsh mountains. And these border raids continued under the Norman and Angevin kings.

In the days of Henry III. there arose among the Welsh chiefs a great prince named Lewellyn ap Gryffydd, who ruled over all the country round Snowdon. He had helped Simon de Montfort, but finally he had been forced to do homage to Henry III.

When Edward I. summoned him to renew his homage, Lewellyn politely but firmly refused. Then



Edward led a great army into Wales, and blockaded all the mountain passes, so that Lewellyn and his forces were starved into surrender. Edward then set up his own governors to rule the Welsh, and he built strong castles to keep them in order, at Conway, Carnarvon, Harlech, and elsewhere, but he allowed Lewellyn to go free.



Conway Castle, North Wales.

The patriotic Welsh hated the English governors, who were often harsh and cruel and would not let them keep their old customs which they loved. So they rebelled again ; and Edward I. once more had to march into Wales. Lewellyn was killed in battle, and his head, crowned in mockery with a paper crown, was set up over the Tower of London.

But Edward I. took care this time to appoint governors who would treat the Welsh kindly so long as they obeyed the laws. In the little town of Rhuddlan there

still stands an old wall bearing the inscription : " This fragment is the remains of the building where King Edward the First held his Parliament, A.D. 1283, in which was passed the Statute of Rhuddlan, securing to the Principality of Wales its judicial rights and independence."

There is a story that Edward I., to please the Welsh, promised that he would give them a prince " born in Wales, who could speak never a word of English, and who never did wrong to man, woman, or child." When the Welsh chieftains arrived at his castle of Carnarvon, Edward presented their prince to them—his baby son, just born in the castle. The Welsh cheered and took it as a good omen, and since then the king's eldest son has usually been created " Prince of Wales."

When King George V.'s eldest son came of age, he went to a great ceremony at Carnarvon Castle to be invested as Prince of Wales.

## 24. Edward I. : Scotland wins Freedom

Edward I., 1272-1307. Edward II., 1307-1327.  
Bannockburn, 1314

### § 1

SCOTLAND proved a harder problem for Edward I. than Wales. She had had kings of her own for hundreds of years. The later kings and many of the nobles were partly of Norman descent and held some lands in England, *e.g.* in Cumberland and in Huntingdon. For these English lands, of course, they had to do homage to the English king.



As in the case of Wales, there were frequent troubles on the borderland between England and Scotland. In Henry II.'s reign the Scottish king, William the Lion, had been captured at Alnwick, and had then been called upon to go to Normandy to do homage to Henry for the whole kingdom of Scotland. Then Richard I. absolved him from this feudal vassalage, in return for a large sum to help him to go to the Crusades.

Nearly a hundred years later the Scottish king, Alexander III., died (1286), leaving no sons. His daughter had married the King of Norway, so the only heir to the Scottish throne was her little three-year-old girl, called the Maid of Norway.



The Scottish  
Lion.

Now Edward I. thought it would be a good plan if Scotland and England could be joined under one king; so he proposed that the little girl should be betrothed to his son Edward. The Scots agreed, provided they might keep their own laws. So Edward dispatched a ship to fetch the little maid, and he sent some good things for her to eat—walnuts, raisins, figs, and ginger-bread. But she was a delicate little girl, and the stormy voyage made her so ill that she had to be landed at the Orkney Islands, where she died.

Then thirteen Scottish barons, all connected with the royal house, claimed the throne, and they appealed to Edward I. to act as umpire. Edward agreed to do so, but he made them promise that the new king should do homage to him for Scotland itself. The claimants consented. Then Edward chose John Balliol, of Norman descent, who certainly had the best claim.

But Balliol soon found that his English overlord meant to interfere a good deal in Scottish affairs. The King of Scotland was often summoned to appear in Edward's law courts to answer appeals from Scottish courts. Once he had to travel all the way from Scotland to London to answer a petty charge about a barrel of wine for which the last king had not paid. The Scots despised Balliol for submitting to this sort of thing, and at last they persuaded him to make friends with the French king, who was then fighting against England (1295). And so began the long three hundred years' alliance between Scotland and France, which was directed against England, the enemy of both.

This was a serious matter for England. So Edward I. marched north with his army, sacked Berwick, where 8,000 men were killed, won the Battle of Dunbar, and forced Balliol to submit. "Then came to him King John of Scotland to his mercy, and did render quietly the realm of Scotland, as he that had done amiss."

Edward left Earl Warrenne and Cressingham to rule Scotland for him. And he carried back to London the much-treasured Stone of Destiny, on which Scottish kings had been crowned. It was supposed to have been the very stone on which Jacob pillowed his head when he dreamed of the angels at Bethel. To this day it forms part of the chair in Westminster Abbey in which all our kings are crowned.



The Coronation Chair, with the Stone of Destiny.





STIRLING CASTLE TO-DAY. (As seen from the air.)

*Central Aerophoto Company.*

## § 2

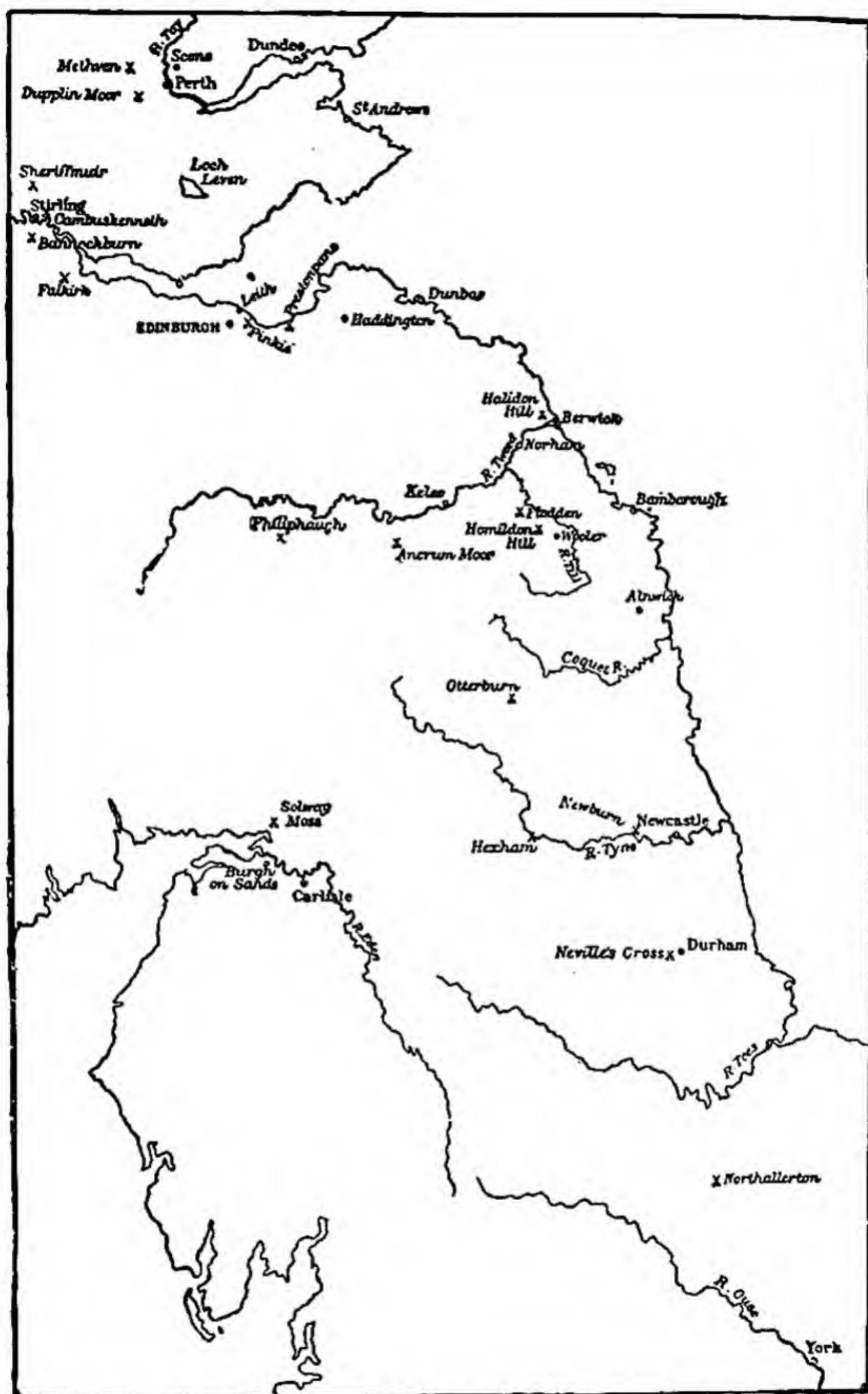
The English governors, especially Cressingham, soon made themselves hated for their cruelty. Then the Scottish people found a leader in a brave knight, called Sir William Wallace, though the nobles despised him because he was not of noble birth. Wallace, with an army of farmers and peasants, met Cressingham's army at a narrow bridge near Stirling, the gateway to northern Scotland, which the English soldiers could only cross two at a time. Wallace's men allowed half of them to cross, then fell on them and defeated them easily (1297). The hated Cressingham was killed, and the Scottish soldiers are said to have stripped the skin from his body to make themselves belts!

Encouraged by Wallace's success, the whole country was soon up in arms. But when King Edward hurried back from his French wars and came north, he defeated Wallace at the Battle of Falkirk (1298), where the English archers gained great fame.

Still Wallace himself was unconquered. He fled to the mountains, and, safe among the country people who loved him, he kept on troubling Edward's army by sudden attacks with small bands of followers. At last he was betrayed by a Scottish nobleman into Edward's hands, and tried as a traitor. Wallace protested that he was no traitor, having never done homage to Edward; but he was put to death with horrible cruelty in London, and the four quarters of his body were sent to Newcastle, Berwick, Perth, and Stirling to be shown on the city walls.

Edward's cruelty did not crush Scotland. A new





The battlefields of English and Scots in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

leader arose (1306) in Robert Bruce the younger. He was a fierce and lawless young Scottish baron of royal blood. And he had murdered his rival, Red Comyn, in front of the very altar of the church in Dumfries, and had then escaped to the wilds, calling on all true Scots to rally round him and make war on the hated English. But few joined him at first, and he went through great hardships and dangers. Once he defended a narrow mountain pass single-handed against a large force, slaying his enemies one by one as they came up. His courage was invincible, and at last the Scottish patriots began to look to him as their king.

King Edward I., now old and sick, swore he would not rest till the rebels were tamed, and he set out from Carlisle at the head of his army, though he could scarcely sit up on his horse. A few miles north of Carlisle he died, "that famous and excellent king, who all his days was a man courageous and warlike, in all things vigorous and renowned . . . leaving not his like for wisdom and valour among all Christian princes" \*—though his enemies might not agree with this description of the "Hammer of the Scots."

### § 3

Edward I.'s last orders to his son were that the war should be carried on, without even waiting for the burial of his body. But his son, Edward II., was idle, weak, and pleasure-loving. He stayed in London, amusing himself with his favourites, and allowed Bruce to go about Scotland, rousing the whole nation to arms. At last, he did march north with a huge

\* *Lanercost Chronicle.*



army, and met Bruce's little force at Bannockburn, near Stirling, 1314. The night before the battle the English spent in feasting and revelry, confident of victory. Meantime, Bruce's men, by his orders, dug deep pits



King and courtiers (Edward II.)

in the uneven ground, filled with sharp-pointed stakes. They covered the holes with hurdles and turf, strong enough to support a foot-soldier, but not a heavy mail-clad and mounted knight.

Then the sun rose, shining on the helmets and spears of the huge English force. The Scots were on

rising ground above the stream called Bannock Burn. The English were in a bad position. Their cavalry were too cramped to move against the Scottish spearmen who thrust the English barons and knights into stream and marsh. When Edward II got his archers into position, Bruce's horsemen fell upon them and scattered them. The Earl of Pembroke seized King Edward II.'s bridle and forced him to gallop out of the fight. The Scots won an enormous amount of plunder, and it was said that a train of baggage wagons sixty miles long fell into their hands. This great victory was the turning point in Scotland's struggle for freedom, and peace was concluded some years later (1328).

Thus Scotland was not united to England as Edward I. had hoped. Border raids went on as before.

“When the Scots make their invasions into England, they march from twenty to four-and-twenty leagues without halting, as well by night as by day ; for they are all on horseback, except the camp followers, who are on foot. Neither do they carry with them any provisions of bread or wine ; for their habits of sobriety are such, in time of war, that they will live for a long time on flesh half-sodden without bread, and drink the river water without wine.

“They have, therefore, no occasion for pots or pans ; for they dress the flesh of their cattle in the skins, after they have taken them off. . . . Under the flaps of his saddle each man carries a broad plate of metal, behind the saddle a little bag of oatmeal. They place this plate over the fire, mix with water their oatmeal, and when the plate is heated, they put a little of the paste upon it, and make a thin cake, like a crack-





A SCENE IN SWITZERLAND, SHOWING LAKES, SNOW-CAPPED PEAKS, AND A TOWN (ST. MORITZ).

nel or biscuit, which they eat to warm their stomachs. . . . It is, therefore, no wonder that they perform a longer day's march than other soldiers." So wrote the famous chronicler Froissart of the Scottish raiders in the time of Edward III.

## 25. How the Swiss won Freedom

RIGHT in the centre of Europe, high up among the mountains from whose tops the snow never melts, lies the little country of Switzerland. It is a glorious country. The pure white mountain peaks, their lower slopes clothed in dark velvety-green pine forests, the deep, still lakes reflecting the blue sky, the bracing air—all make the traveller feel that he has arrived in fairyland. Yet Switzerland is no fairyland for the people who have to make their living there. They have always had to be sober and industrious, toiling early and late on their little farms.

Such a hilly country breeds strong, brave, hard-working men, the world's best fighters when they are driven to fight with their backs to the wall. Such were the Swiss. Surrounded by big powerful countries, and with no way of escape by sea, Switzerland is an independent country; and no one now thinks of laying hands on her. But she had to win her freedom.

In the time of our William I., the Holy Roman Emperors, who tried to rule over all Central Europe, included Switzerland in their dominions. But they did not often interfere, and so long as the Swiss were allowed to manage their own local concerns, they willingly called the Emperor overlord.



Then later, in our Edward I.'s time, a harsh and cruel Duke of Austria was made Governor of Switzerland. His son Albert, who happened to be elected Emperor after his father's death, was determined to break the spirit of the Swiss who had defied him. He sent them as their governor a man called Gessler, a thorough bully, with secret orders to provoke them into rebellion, so that they might be conquered and properly subdued once and for all.

One day, so the story goes, a young man was ploughing his fields when the Austrian governor came up and ordered his oxen to be unyoked and led away for his own use. Another working man had saved money during many years of hard toil and was building himself a fine house. Gessler's servants said it was much too grand for a workman, and ordered him to pay an enormous fine as he was so well off.

This sort of thing was more than the patient but stubborn Swiss could bear. Their bitter feeling at this time, and their bravery and determination, are well shown in a story which was probably invented more than a hundred years later. The story of William Tell, long believed to be true, is still treasured in Altdorf; and so recently as 1895 a fine statue of Tell and his son, by a famous sculptor, was set up in the market-place.

One day, the story goes, a man called William Tell was walking with his little son through the market-place of Altdorf (or Old Village), when he saw a long pole set up with Gessler's cap on top. Every one who passed bowed and raised his hat to it, and Tell was told that they did so by command of the Austrian governor, to show respect to their overlord. Tell thought it was

an insulting order, and marched past with his head covered. At that very moment Gessler himself rode up, and his soldiers seized Tell, accusing him of disloyalty.

Now Tell was the most famous archer in a nation of good archers, so Gessler thought of a cruel punishment. He commanded Tell to shoot an apple off his son's head at a distance of a hundred paces. With white, set face Tell drew forth two arrows, and, amid a deathly silence, shot the first with so true an aim that it split the apple in half, and the boy ran forward unharmed.

Even Gessler applauded Tell's skill and asked : "What was the second arrow for?" "For you, if the first had missed its aim," retorted Tell boldly. Then the enraged Gessler commanded Tell to be bound hand and foot and carried off in his boat on Lake Lucerne, the people standing sullenly round with fury in their hearts.

But on the lake a sudden storm arose, and Tell was unbound so that he might steer, for he understood these squalls better than the foreigners. He also knew the shore better. As they steered close to a rocky ledge (still called "Tell's Rock") he gave a sudden leap on shore, and vanished into the forest. Gessler's terrified men managed to bring the boat to land at last, but as they were following a path through the woods, Tell's second arrow found its mark in Gessler's heart.

Three men who had suffered from the Austrian tyrants met one night during a thunderstorm, and swore a solemn oath that they would not rest till they had freed their country. Others were secretly enrolled, and on New Year's Day, 1308, according



to plan, many of the Austrian castles were seized by a clever trick, and their garrisons made prisoners. For a time the Emperor was too busy elsewhere to punish the Swiss, and they were left alone.

Then, in our Edward II.'s reign, a great Austrian army under the Emperor Leopold rode into Switzerland, laughing and joking at the victory they were going to win over these rude peasants. But as the knights in glittering armour rode through a mountain pass, they were surprised by a volley of big stones and rocks which came hurtling down on their heads, killing many of them. Then other Swiss, armed with heavy clubs, came swooping down on the terrified Austrians, and the most splendid army in Europe was soon cut to pieces and had fled in all directions.

This great victory of Morgarten (1315) won Swiss freedom for ever—the year after the Scottish had won their freedom at Bannockburn. To this day—though by race and language the northern Swiss are German, the westerners French, and the southerners Italian—there is probably no more united, patriotic, and well-governed country in Europe.

## 26. Schools and Universities

### *The Story of Roger Bacon*

#### § I

BEFORE the Christian era began, the men of ancient Babylon, Egypt, and, above all, the men of Greece had added much to the sum of man's knowledge. The Romans had learned from them—especially from the



IS NOT THIS GREAT BABYLON THAT I HAVE BUILT?

Nermechadnezar lived centuries before Christ was born. He was one of the greatest kings of Babylon, and captured Jerusalem and carried off its riches. He built a new capital in his great empire, and is here shown surveying his handiwork.



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Greeks—and had spread their knowledge through all the countries of Europe ruled by them.



A lady teaching her son from illuminated manuscript book.

*(From a 13th-century MS. in the British Museum.)*

Then the Barbarians broke up the Roman Empire. They knew nothing of books, and so learning began to decay. The monasteries were the only places in that dark age in which a man might have quiet for study,



and so the studious man took refuge there. Attached to the monastery there was often a school in which novices (future monks) and some other boys were taught Latin, so that they might be able to read and sing the church services.

Now our own Saxon England was a dark corner of Europe when the Normans arrived. They found that many of the clergy hardly knew any Latin, and had lost all interest in learning. The influence of the more learned Norman monks and bishops revived Church life and learning, and led to the founding of many new monasteries and schools.\* Norman barons and monks frequently travelled between Normandy and England, and brought new ideas from Europe into our country. When our Henry I. came to the throne (1100), there were already in Europe at least three famous universities: Paris (France), Bologna (Italy), and Cordova (Spain).

Spain at this time was in the hands of the Moors. These Moors were skilled in mathematics and science; and their university was so famous that many Christian students visited it. As Latin was the common language in which lectures were given in all universities, students could and often did wander from one place to another, carrying the latest ideas with them.

The learning of the Moors or Arabs entered Europe at the west end through Spain; but also from the Holy Land through the Crusaders. It found its way to Paris and to Bologna, and sometime in the twelfth century to Oxford. John of Salisbury, Becket's friend, was one of Oxford's first teachers.

So the university of Oxford started. It began by a few teachers settling there to give lectures. Many

\* See Chapter 4, § 2.

students were soon attracted, and then more teachers came. Probably it was to the school belonging to the great Priory of St. Frideswide in Oxford that the first eminent teachers came.

But for a long time there were no colleges where



Boy being punished at grammar lesson.

(British Museum, MS. Burney, 270, f. 91, C. 1350.)

the students could live and learn together. The students were of all ages. Many were bright boys who came on from school at only thirteen or fourteen ; others were grown men who till now had not had the chance of study. Many were so poor that they begged their way to and from Oxford. They lived anywhere they could, often in squalid lodgings.



At Cambridge the students seem to have been overcharged sometimes for their lodgings. For Henry III. thus wrote to the mayor and bailiffs of Cambridge: "We have heard that in letting your lodgings you are so heavy and burdensome to the scholars that unless you behave yourselves more measurably, they must leave our city . . . which we in no respect desire. . . . If any further complaint should reach us, we should put our hand to the matter."

In the universities the students crowded round their lecturer wherever he could find a shelter—in a loft, a barn, or a church porch. They had no books—probably the lecturer himself had only a few; but they listened eagerly, and their memories were better than ours, because they had to rely more on them.

Some of the students gathered together to live in halls managed by themselves, and in time these halls became colleges. They had no proper games; their sports were very rough, and often led them into brawls with the townsfolk, who resented the sudden inrush of this mixed crowd into their cities. Many a students' brawl led to a sort of pitched battle, to which the great bell of the university church called students and townspeople from all quarters.

By the fourteenth century the numbers of students were increasing so rapidly that proper houses had to be found for them, and rules laid down. So colleges began to grow. Walter de Merton, Bishop of Rochester, founded the first of these colleges at Oxford, namely, Merton College. Its old library still stands, with its ancient precious manuscript books chained to the shelves, lest a too eager student might be tempted to carry them away. Many of the students studied in

order to become priests, or friars who by now had become famous as preachers.

In the fourteenth century was also founded Peterhouse, the first college in Cambridge.

William of Wykeham was a wise and good bishop of Winchester, and he founded New College, Oxford, for a hundred clerks. Then, because he wanted his scholars to be well grounded in Latin before they went to New College, he founded the famous school at Winchester, still one of England's greatest schools.

Later on Henry VI., a king much more interested in learning than in fighting, founded King's College at Cambridge, and the famous boys' school at Eton.



A University lecture, early 15th century.

(*British Museum, MS. Royal, 17 E. iii., f. 209.*)



## § 2

What did boys and men study in these old schools and universities? Latin was the language of the church services, the language of the lawyers, the language in which most books, certainly all learned



Aristotle.

(Statue in the Spada Palace, Rome.)

books, were written. Therefore "grammar"—the art of speaking and writing Latin correctly—was the foundation of everything. The schools aimed at teaching a boy "grammar" thoroughly before he reached the university; they were not always successful, for some students had to master Latin after they reached Oxford or Cambridge. Owing to the importance of Latin grammar, schools founded in the Middle Ages and afterwards were (and are still) called Grammar Schools, and these schools may be found in every

county and almost every old town in the country.

Students in those days learned not only "grammar," but also arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. They learnt little history or geography, and the study of science had hardly started. For literature, they might read a few old tales of the Trojan War or of King Arthur's Knights. The writings of the famous old Greek thinker, Aristotle, which had been redis-

covered in the twelfth century, and the Bible, were the two main objects of study. Students knew parts of these great books very thoroughly, and they exercised their wits for hours by clever and subtle arguments based on texts drawn from one or other of them.

### § 3

The whole sum of human knowledge was so small in those days that a friar, named Roger Bacon, even gathered it all together, with the results of his own researches, into one book called *The Great Work*.

Roger Bacon was a remarkable man. He was the son of a Somersetshire parson, and he went on from the village school to Oxford at the age of thirteen. There he became known as "the wonderful doctor." He knew Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and mathematics. Above all, he had what would be called to-day a practical scientific mind ; and he wanted to prove everything for himself by experiment.

This was not considered right in those days. At one time he was even imprisoned in Paris and deprived of pen and paper as a dangerous man. Then the Pope secured his release, and he returned to Oxford to continue his experiments.

In many ways his ideas seem like a prophecy of modern inventions : " It is possible to make a chariot which, without any help of animals, shall move with that irresistible force which is ascribed to those scythed chariots in which the ancients fought.

" It is possible to make instruments for flying, so that a man sitting in the middle thereof, and steering



with a kind of rudder, may manage what is contrived to serve the purpose of wings, so as to pass through the air.

“We can so shape transparent substances, and so arrange them with respect to our sight and objects, that rays can be broken and bent as we please . . . and thus from an incredible distance we may read even the smallest letters, and number the grains of dust and sand. . . . And thus a boy may seem a giant and a man a mountain.”

So wrote this wonderful doctor, six hundred years ago, of the miracles of science which have at last in our own days been achieved—in the motor-car, the aeroplane, and the telescope.

## 27. The Greatness of the Cities of Italy

THE greatness of a nation depends less on the extent of its lands than on the character of the men and women who live in it. The vast land of Russia has counted for much less in the world than the little British Isles or the small country of Greece or of Holland. Some of the most famous States of the past have been only cities, with surrounding land no bigger than an English county. Such was, in ancient days,

“Rich and renowned, and with violets crowned,  
Athens, the envied of nations.”

Such, during the Middle Ages, were the cities of Italy—Rome, Florence, Milan, Genoa, Venice.

The greatest poet of the Middle Ages, Dante, as well as many of the great artists and sculptors and

mighty builders, and "the most Christlike of saints, Francis," came from the cities of Italy.

There was no king of "Italy," as there had been for two hundred years a king of "England." The Pope had his lands around Rome, and they were called the Papal States. And the Emperors used to come from Germany, hurrying over the Alps from time to time, sweeping through Italy, up to the gates of Rome, to assert their overlordship of Italy, and to keep the Pope in his right place as they thought. All through the Middle Ages there were numerous nobles in Italy, as in England in Stephen's reign; and they built castles, kept up armies, and carried on private wars, often making life a misery for the common people.

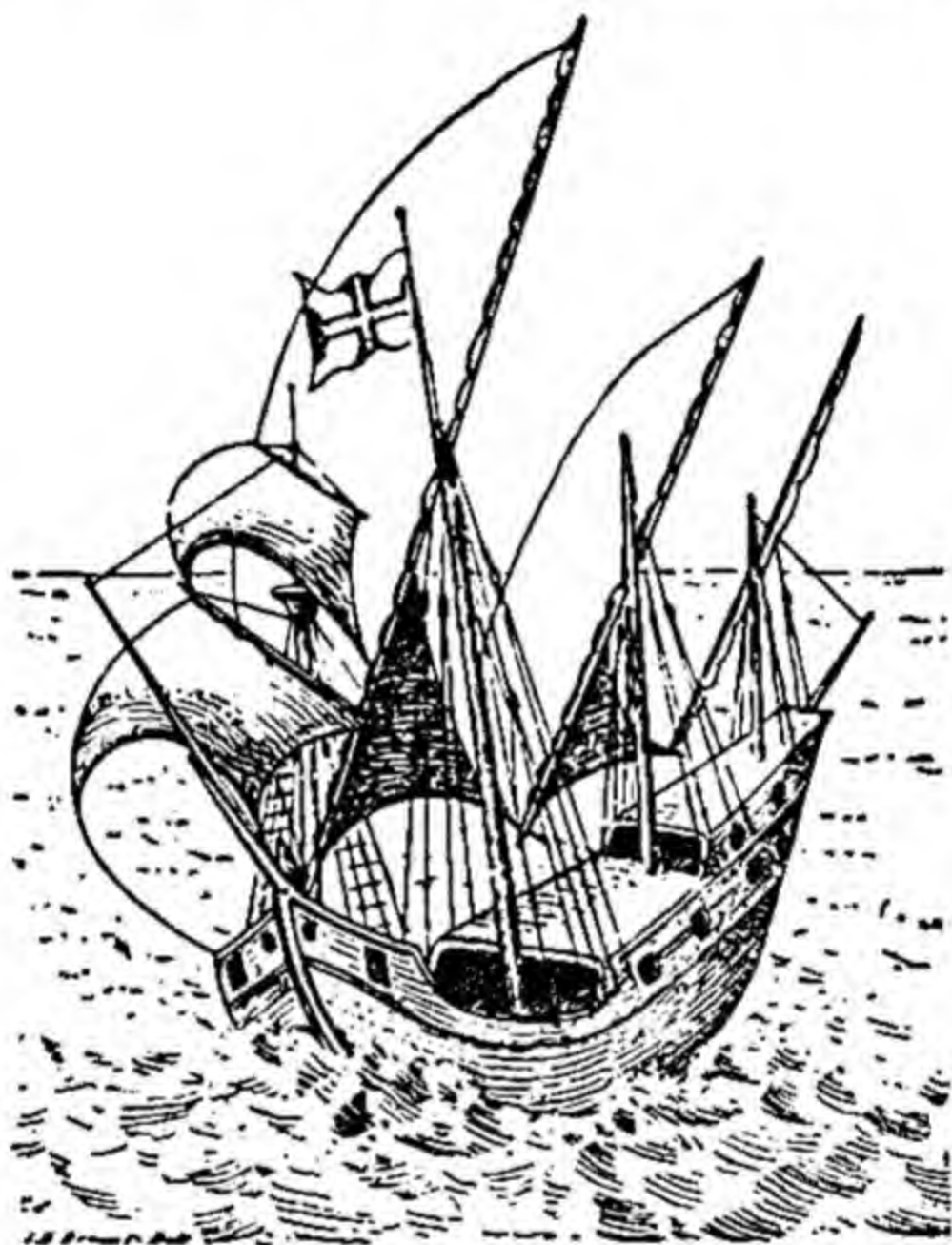
So the most energetic of the country people fled into the towns, and made a living by trade. Here they were at least safer behind a strong wall of their own, among men of the same class and occupation as themselves, neighbours with whom they could talk over grievances and discuss remedies. They worked hard and saved money year by year. When the Emperor came to them for help, they sold him weapons and armour; when the Pope's forces came their way, they changed sides, as often as not, and sold their help for a higher price.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—the time of the Crusades—many of the barons wanted money in a hurry to buy armour and weapons and to furnish ships to go to the Holy Land. One of these barons, a great duke, asked the elders of the city of Florence to give him money. Then the elders took counsel together, and promised to give it him in return for a



“ charter ” allowing to them and their heirs the right to govern their town, punish their own criminals, and collect their own taxes.

The lord gave his promise in writing, more or less cheerfully, received the money, and rode off, leaving



A trading vessel of the period.

his “ charter ” in the hands of the city merchants, who locked it up in their strong box.

So, in one way or another, it came about that the cities of Italy became what we call “ sovereign States ” ; that is to say, they each had their own ruler (often called a duke, duce, or doge), their own army, laws, coinage, and flag.

One of the greatest victories ever won by an Italian city against an Emperor was the Battle of Legnano—

in our Henry II.'s time (1176). The brave townsmen of Milan marched to battle with their sacred cart (or "carroccio") in their midst. On it was placed a curious assortment—a large figure of Christ, a banner, an altar, a medicine chest, and a military band. The "carroccio" was surrounded by the Company of Death—a band of citizens sworn to die rather than surrender, each man fighting shoulder to shoulder with his dearest friend.

They won so great a victory that the great Emperor Barbarossa (or "Red-beard") resolved not to interfere with the Italian cities again. Soon afterwards he was drowned while on a Crusade. After this victory the Emperors seldom interfered with the Italian cities.

It will be seen later how another city, "Queen of the Adriatic Sea"—Venice—became the greatest seaport of Europe, and how her famous merchants, the Polos, traded with China (chapter 30).



The Bridge of Sighs,  
Venice.

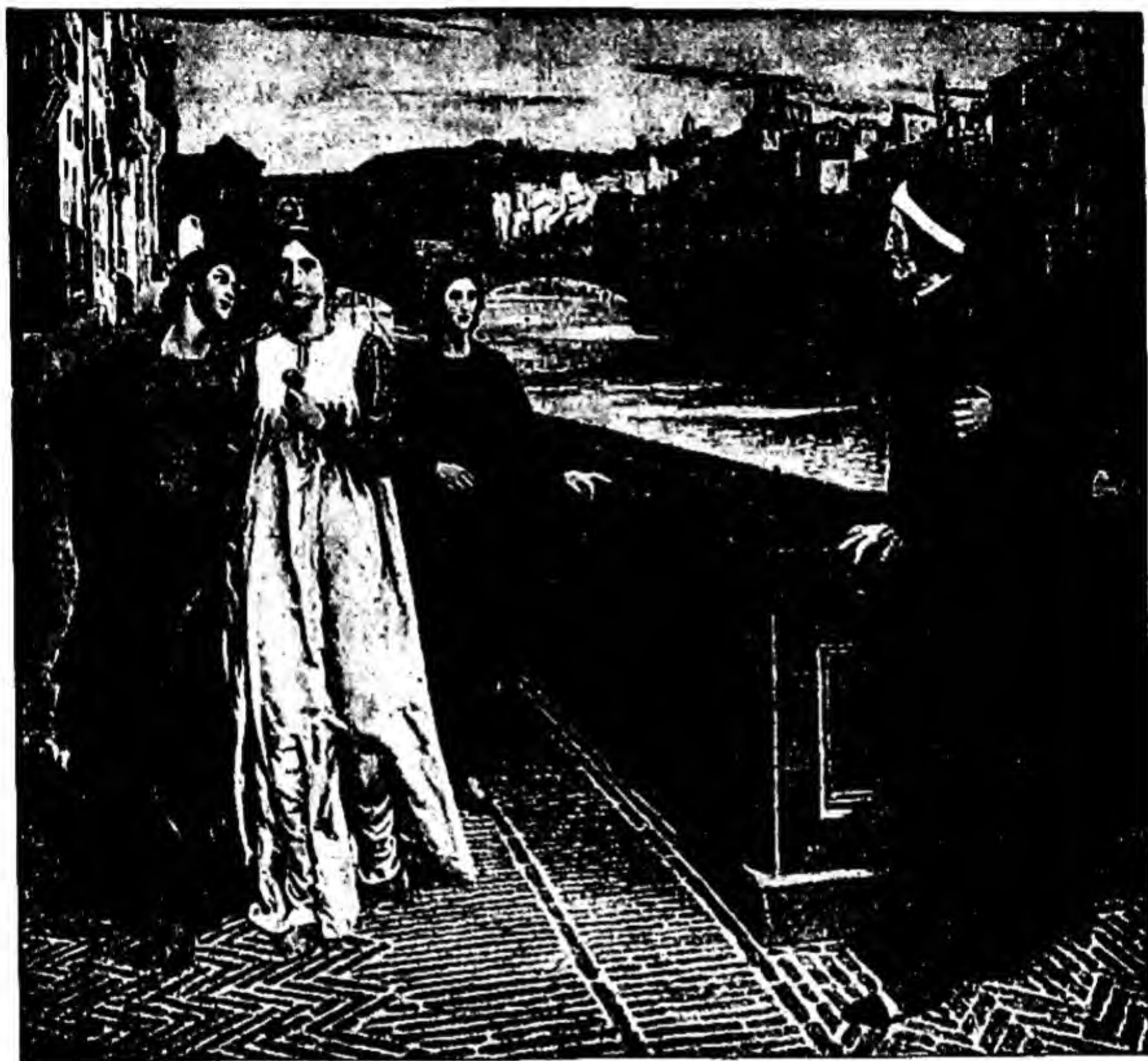
## 28. Great Men of Florence

*Dante the poet, Giotto and Fra Angelico the artists*

PERHAPS, among all the glorious old cities of Italy, the best beloved and most often visited to-day is Florence. This beautiful city stands on the river Arno, in a valley



surrounded by gently sloping hills. Many great men have come out of that city, of whom perhaps the most famous is Dante the poet (1265-1321).



The meeting of Dante and Beatrice.

(Henry Holiday: Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.)

No man ever had a sadder life. The woman whom he loved and admired with a more than earthly love—Beatrice—died when he was still young; but he remained faithful to her as his ideal throughout his life. Dante was intensely patriotic. But when he was a young man, he found his city torn by civil war between

the "Whites" and the "Blacks." One of his first griefs was the duty of sitting as a judge and condemning his own best friend, who belonged to the opposite party. He himself, in the course of the civil war, was made a prisoner, and was banished in his turn from his beloved city.

For nineteen long years (1302-1321) he wandered through Italy, too wretched to make a real home elsewhere. His face, as Giotto's \* famous portrait shows, grew more stern and sombre, as he saw everywhere the evils of civil war which spoilt so many cities, the greed of some of the Popes, the scandals in the Church, and the miseries of the poor. He studied books, he observed the world around him, and turned all things over in his own heart and mind.

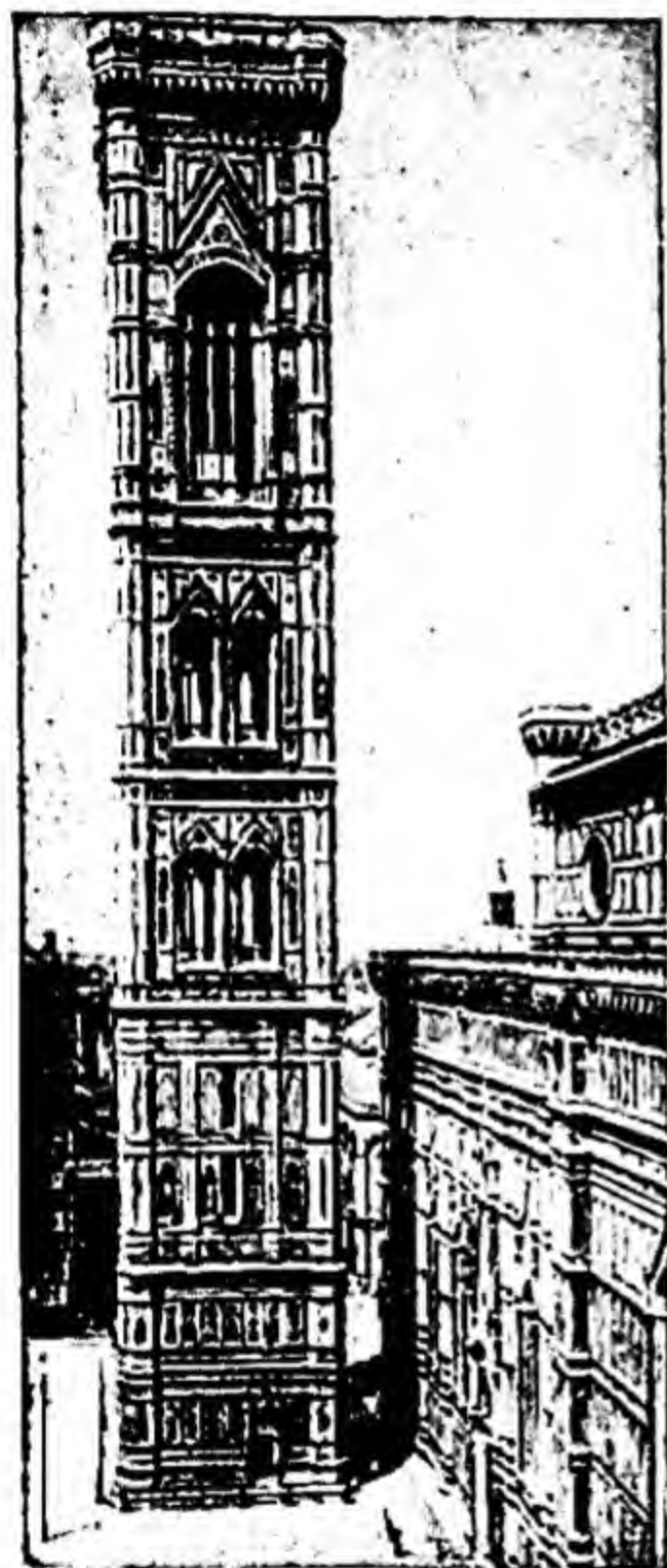
Then he wrote a book, called *The Divine Comedy*. It tells the story of a dream in which Dante meets the spirits of the departed famous men of all ages, as well as those whom he had met and with whom he had talked. It shows us the world as Dante saw it, the worst sins and the worst evils from which his people suffered. It shows us also how deeply religious he himself was, and how strong and beautiful was his love for Beatrice. His book is indeed one of the greatest the world has ever seen.

Another famous man of Florence was named Giotto (1266-1337). He was a very different man from Dante. He did not meddle with politics or city affairs, and so he managed to pass his days in peace. He was a short, sturdy, good-natured workman, with rosy cheeks, twinkling eyes, and a snub nose, and he used to

\* See portrait on page 50; also Giotto's picture of St. Francis on page 104.



make jokes at his own ugliness. He is for ever famous because he was one of the earliest of the many great artists whom Italy has produced. He painted beautiful pictures, much less stiff and formal and more lifelike than those of the earlier Italian painters.



Bell-tower, Florence,  
by Giotto.

At the age of fifty-six he was asked to make a new belfry for Florence. It seems strange to us that a painter should be asked to become an architect. But these artist-craftsmen of mediæval Italy, who mixed their own paints and carried their own ladders, seemed gloriously able to do all kinds of things. They seemed to live intensely, and to put their whole soul into whatever they were doing ; and so they achieved success. The bell-tower which Giotto built for Florence is his masterpiece.

Now the Pope wanted an artist to adorn some of the buildings in Rome, and he sent messengers throughout Italy to ask artists to send in specimens of their work. Many well-known men laboured hard at this com-

petition, for it would be a great honour to be called to Rome to work for the Pope. But when Giotto was asked to submit something, he merely with one hand drew a perfect circle on a blank sheet of paper. It is not known whether he intended to show that a

man who could without compasses draw a perfect circle was an artist, or whether, being so well known, he disdained competition. But in Italy they still say "round as the circle of Giotto."

Once he went to do some work for the King of Naples. It was a very hot day, and the king stood idly watching him as he worked, with the perspiration rolling down his face. "I should not work so hard if I were you," observed the king. "Neither should I, if I were you," retorted this proud and witty craftsman.

Another great artist of Florence was named Fra Angelico. He was a monk of the convent of San Marco, and his splendid paintings may still be seen on its whitewashed walls, where they have gladdened the eyes of many generations of monks. His pictures of Christ, of the apostles, and of the angels are full of a tender and sympathetic grace, reflecting his own tranquil soul.

It has been said that the only thing he could not paint with success was an evil face, because he could not understand evil. One of his fellow-monks wrote of him : " During his pure and simple life, he was such a friend to the poor that I think his soul must now be in heaven. He might have had wealth, but scorned it, and used to say that true riches are found in contentment. He never scolded but with a smile."

The only thing that ever roused his wrath was the suggestion that he should take money for his work. He was a happy soul, and behind his convent walls, in his art and in his religion, he found that peace which was denied to the poet Dante.



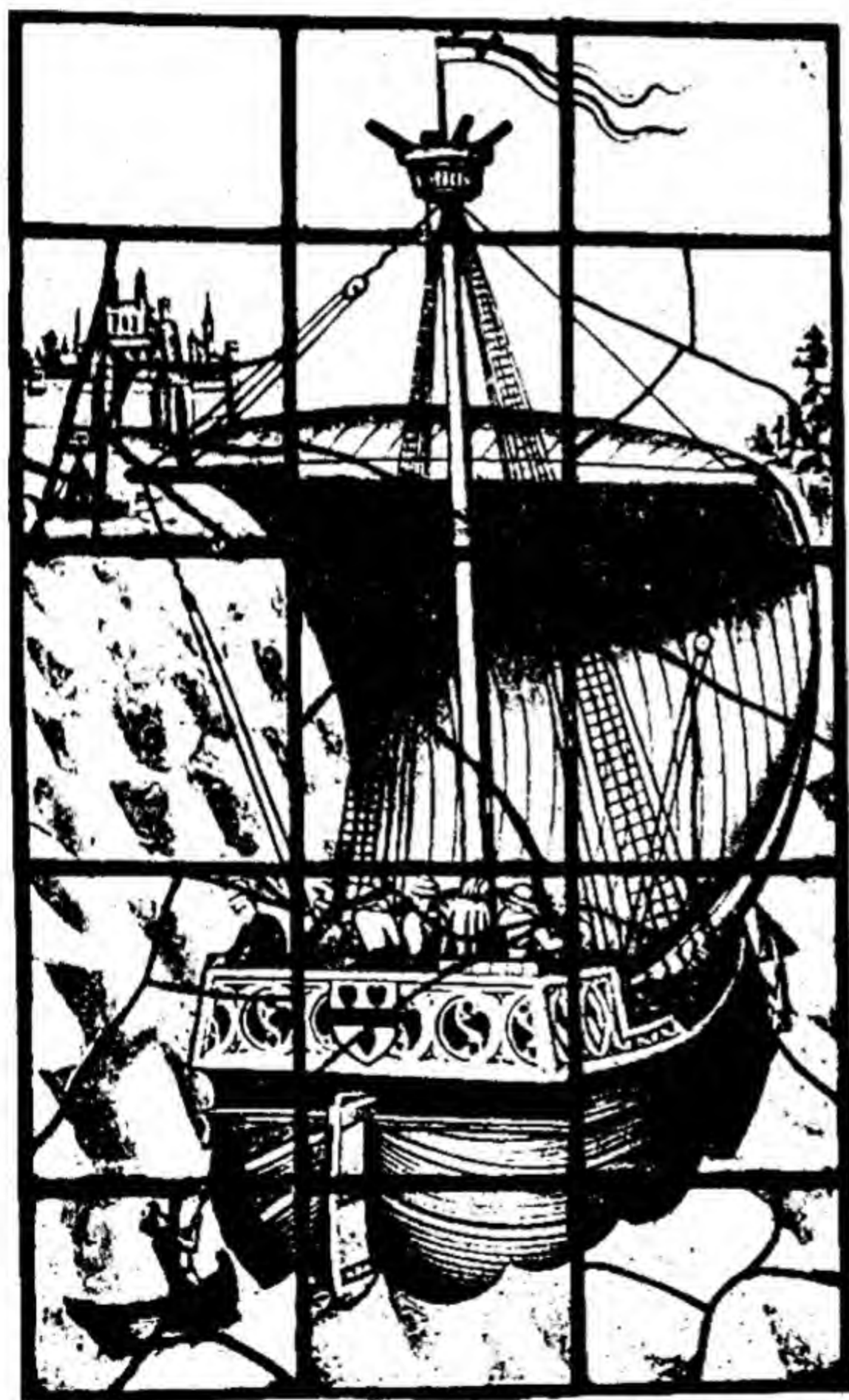
## 29. "Wedded to the Sea"

*Venice*

IN the Middle Ages the English were not the great seafaring nation they afterwards became. Some of

the best sailors and the most adventurous merchants came from Venice, which lies at the head of the Adriatic Sea.

Venice is unlike any other city. It is built on a number of little islands, and its chief "roads" are canals, or channels of the sea, along which used to glide silent gondolas—instead of rattling carts. Venice early became one of the great free cities of Italy. Genoa was another great shipping port, and the rival of Venice.



The ship of a French merchant, Jacques Cœur, which traded with Venice and the Near East.

(From a window of his mansion at Bourges.)

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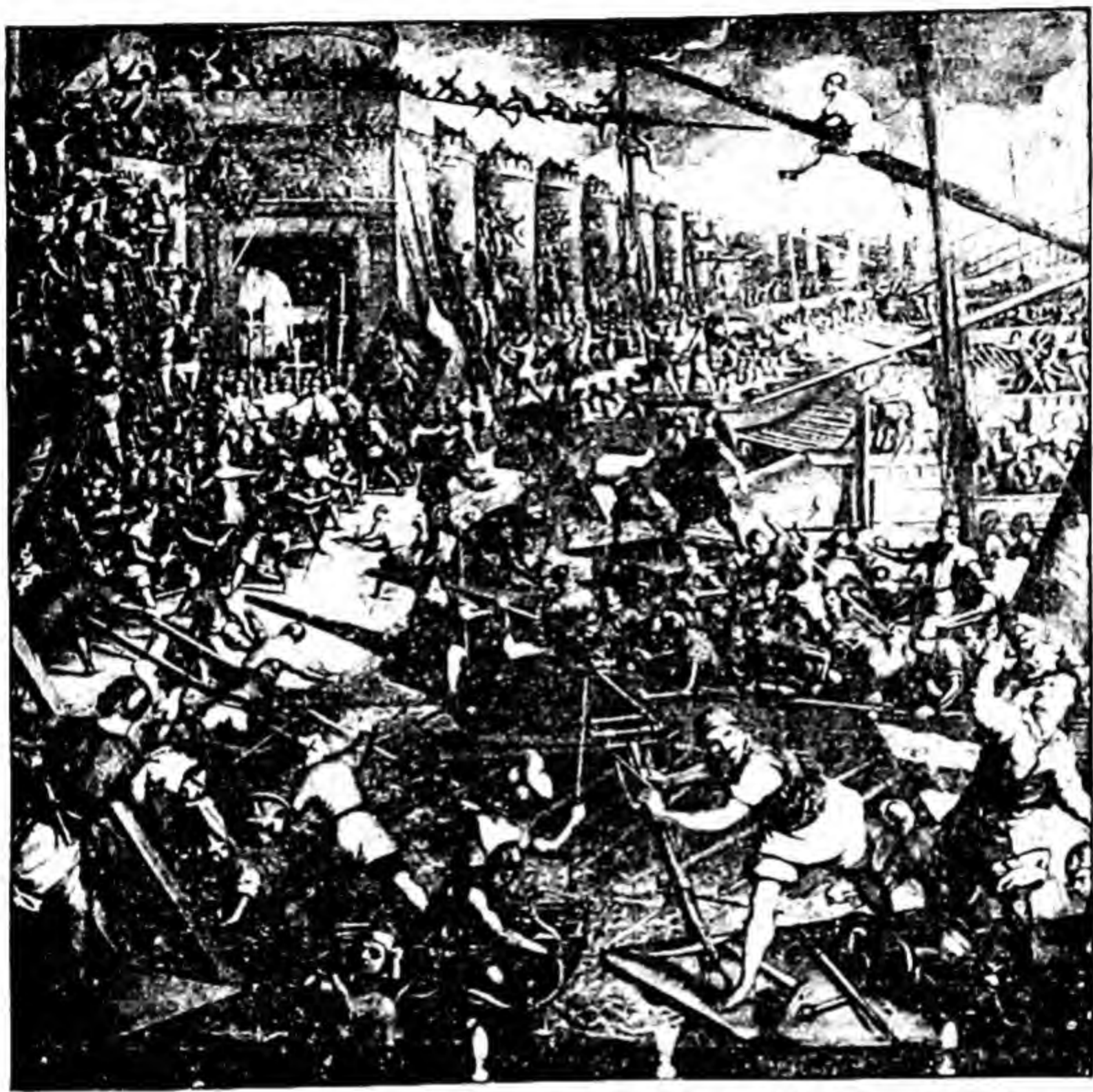


BY SHIP

A DOGE OR DUKE OF VENICE, LEONARDO TORRELLANO—1511

Long and bitter wars between them ended in the decline of Genoa and the triumph of Venice.

Merchants from Venice, like Marco Polo, travelled



Dandolo, Doge of Venice, at the siege of Constantinople.

*(From the painting by Tintoretto in the Doge's Palace, Venice.)*

far afield. Foreign merchants came from the East, bringing porcelain from far-off China, spices from the East Indies, silks, ivory, precious stones, and Persian carpets. These were unshipped at Venice and sent overland to the cities of Europe and of England.



In the same way, German merchants brought their furs, English merchants their wool, French merchants their wines to the great port on the Adriatic, whence they were shipped to all parts.

Now in our King John's reign a Crusading army on its way to the East came to Venice to beg or hire ships (1204). The Doge (duke or ruler) replied that they should have a fleet if they would first join in an attack on Constantinople—the centre of European trade. So the Holy War strangely changed into a trade war; and, sad to say, a noble fleet sailed up the Bosphorus to attack the great city built by the Emperor Constantine, which for a thousand years was Europe's fortress against Asia.

The first to leap ashore was the blind but dauntless Doge of Venice, named Dandolo. Constantinople fell, and now Venice had no serious rival. She grew great and rich. Magnificent churches and palaces were built. These are still the wonder of visitors from all parts of the world, especially the great church of St. Mark (San Marco), patron saint of Venice, the "Queen of the Adriatic." Once a year the Doge with great and solemn pomp went out upon the Adriatic, and dropped therein a gold ring, in token that Venice was "wedded to the sea."

An Englishman of long ago tells how

"The great galleys of Venice and Florence  
Be well laden with things of complacence,  
Of spicery and of grocery ware,  
With sweet wines, . . .  
Apes and japes. . . ."

\* "Libelle (*i.e.* little book) of English Policy" (1436).

### 30. The Wonderful Adventures of Marco Polo

#### § I

THE soldiers who came back from the Crusades carried into castle and cottage many wonderful tales of their Eastern enemies, stories of their skill in medicine, their knowledge of the stars, their beautiful buildings. They displayed the costly Eastern rugs, silks, and muslins they had bought or plundered in the Holy Land. And so in many ways they taught their fellow-countrymen to learn even from their enemies, and to be curious about the great world beyond their own little island.

For as yet, in Western Europe, most men knew nothing about the countries beyond Europe, except those parts of North Africa and of Asia which once belonged to the Roman Empire. The Mediterranean Sea, whose blue waters washed the shores of three continents, was still the great highway of their world.

Venice, the wonderful city built on islands at the head of the Adriatic, was the busiest of seaports. On its crowded quays there might have been seen, many a day in the year 1270, when Henry III. was King of England, a bright-eyed restless boy questioning the sailors. He was called Marco Polo, and he was anxious to know whether the sailors had heard any news of his father and uncle who had now been gone overseas many years, ever since he was a baby.

The Polos were merchants of Venice who had actually made their way to far Cathay or China, which



was regarded as a mysterious and far-distant land in those days.



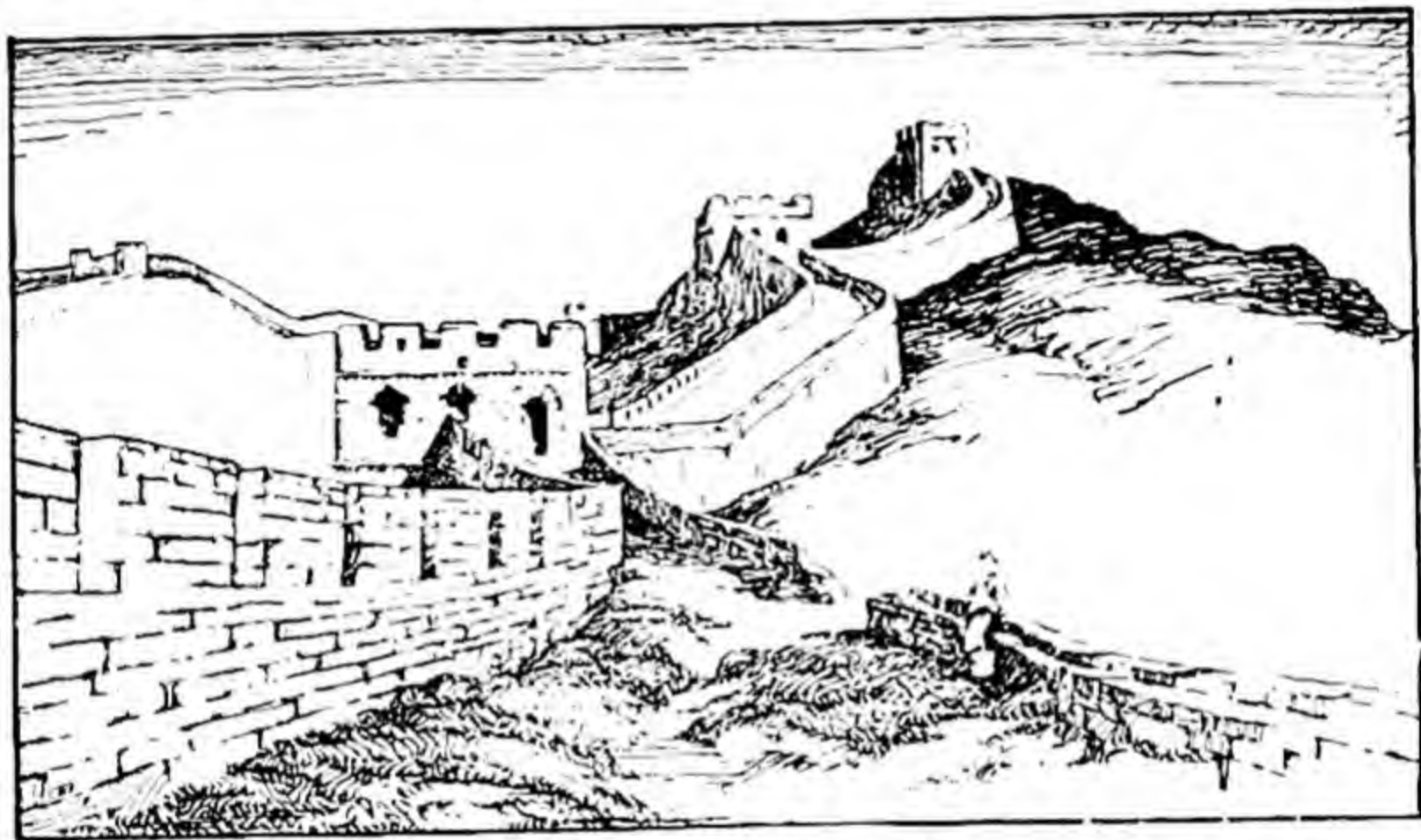
How the brothers Polo set out from Constantinople with their nephew Marco for China.

*(From a miniature painting in the 14th-century "Livre des Merveilles.")*

One day father and uncle returned at last. Then when Marco Polo was seventeen they took him to Cathay with them, in spite of all the dangers they had encountered on their previous perilous journey. It is

hard for us, in these days when almost every day's newspaper tells us of a new travel record, to imagine what that journey to far Cathay must have been like.

They sailed in a small boat across seas where pirates were not unknown. They landed in Lesser Arabia, in the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea, and journeyed thence round the hot



Part of the Great Wall of China.

Arabian desert to the Persian Gulf, where they shipped for the port of Ormuz. Then they struck inland, passing through Central Asia and over the lofty tableland of Tibet, "the Roof of the World." It took them thirty days to cross the waterless desert of Gobi, and then there were vast steppes to be passed.

Marco Polo had grown into a young man of twenty-one before they reached the capital of the great Tartar Emperor of China, named Kublai Khan.

The Chinese are one of the oldest civilized peoples



of the world. They have for centuries been a peace-loving, clever, and industrious people. They knew how to read and write, to paint delicate pictures, to spin and weave silk, to build fine houses and strong walls, to make pottery ("china") hundreds of years before anything was even heard of our "rude forefathers," the ancient Britons.

But about the time that St. Louis was reigning in France, the terrible Tartar conqueror, Jenghiz Khan, with his fierce hordes, burst through that mighty "wall" to the north of China—which had protected the Chinese for so long—conquered them, and made himself Emperor.



A Tartar camp.

(From the Borgian map, 1453.)

These Tartars were a strange, ugly little people: "They be hardy and strong in the breast, lean and pale-faced, rough and hump-shouldered, having flat and

short noses, long and sharp chins, their upper jaws low and declining, their teeth long and thin, eyebrows extending from their foreheads down to their noses, their eyes inconstant and black, their countenances terrible. They have thick and great thighs, short legs, yet equal to us in stature. . . . They fight with javelins, maces, battle-axes, and swords . . . and they are excellent archers. Their backs are slightly armed that they may not flee. . . . Vanquished they ask no favour, and vanquishing they show no mercy, but persist in their purpose of subduing the whole world."

## § 2

It was the grandson of the Tartar conqueror who welcomed the Polos. This grandson became a wise and great ruler and Emperor of China, known as Kublai Khan. He built Peking, the capital city, and it is thus described by Marco Polo in his famous *Travels*: "In that city stands his great palace. . . . It is enclosed all round by a great wall forming a square, each side of which is a mile in length. This, you may depend on it, is also very thick, and a good ten paces in height, white-washed and loop-holed all round. At each angle of the wall there is a very fine and rich palace in which the war-harness of the Emperor is kept, such as bows and quivers, saddles and bridles, and bow-strings, and everything needful for an army. . . . It is the greatest palace that ever was. . . . It hath no upper storey, but is all on the ground floor; the roof is very lofty, and the walls of the palace are all covered with gold and silver. They are also adorned with pictures of dragons, beasts and birds, knights and idols . . . and on the ceiling you can see nothing but gold and silver paintings.

"The hall of the palace is so large that it could easily dine 6,000 people, and it is quite a marvel to see how many rooms there are besides. . . . The outside of the roof is also all covered with vermilion and yellow and green and blue and other hues, which are fixed with a varnish so fine and exquisite that they shine like crystal . . . and are seen for a great way round."

Such was the wonderful palace of Kublai Khan



and it was of him that our poet wrote the well-known lines :

“ In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree :  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man,  
Down to a sunless sea.” \*

Kublai Khan was especially delighted with young Marco's intelligence, and used to send him on messages to different parts of his empire, bidding him keep his eyes and ears open, and report all that he saw when he returned. Marco Polo was well fitted for this work, being an observant young man, and he has left a marvellous account of China and its people and customs, of the great rivers with many merchant ships going up and down, of the magnificent cities, the well-kept farms, and of the peaceable, hard-working Chinese.

When Marco Polo grew older, he was actually made governor of one of the khan's most important cities.

The khan was much interested in the Christian religion, and asked the Polos to send back missionaries from their own country. But he liked all three Polos so much that he was reluctant to part with them, though they begged hard for leave to return home.

Marco Polo had now been twenty years in Cathay, and his father and uncle were getting old men, and they must often have longed to return to Venice. At last a chance occurred. The khan's beautiful daughter was to wed the son of the ruler of Persia ; and the khan, looking for an escort to send with her, knew that the Venetians were better sailors than any of his own people. So he entrusted her to their charge, and they spent two

\* S. T. Coleridge, *Kubla Khan*.

years journeying by sea to Persia. The young princess seems to have preferred her Venetian companions to a Persian husband, for she wept when the time came to part with them.

At last the travellers returned, grey-haired and travel-weary men, to Venice. Their fellow-citizens refused



A Japanese fight against the Chinese, at the time when Marco Polo first saw Japanese.

*(From a mediæval Japanese painting.)*

to believe that they were actually the Polos returned after so many years, and greeted them coldly. But they changed their minds, it is said, at the sight of the rich jewels which the travellers ripped out of the lining of their shabby jackets, where they had sewed them up for safety.

Many of the stories told by Marco Polo were not



believed at the time. But explorers in our own day, who have crossed the wild and lonely spots of Central Asia, and of Burma beyond India, over which he travelled, have reported that his descriptions of places and people are wonderfully accurate. Some of these places had never been touched by a white man's foot from Marco Polo's day until the last century.

There still exists an old copy of Ser Marco Polo's book, with notes written in the margin by a man who read it eagerly. This man had a burning thirst for travel and adventure in his heart—he was the great Columbus, the discoverer of America two hundred years after Marco Polo's time.

### 31. The German Merchants of the "Hanse"

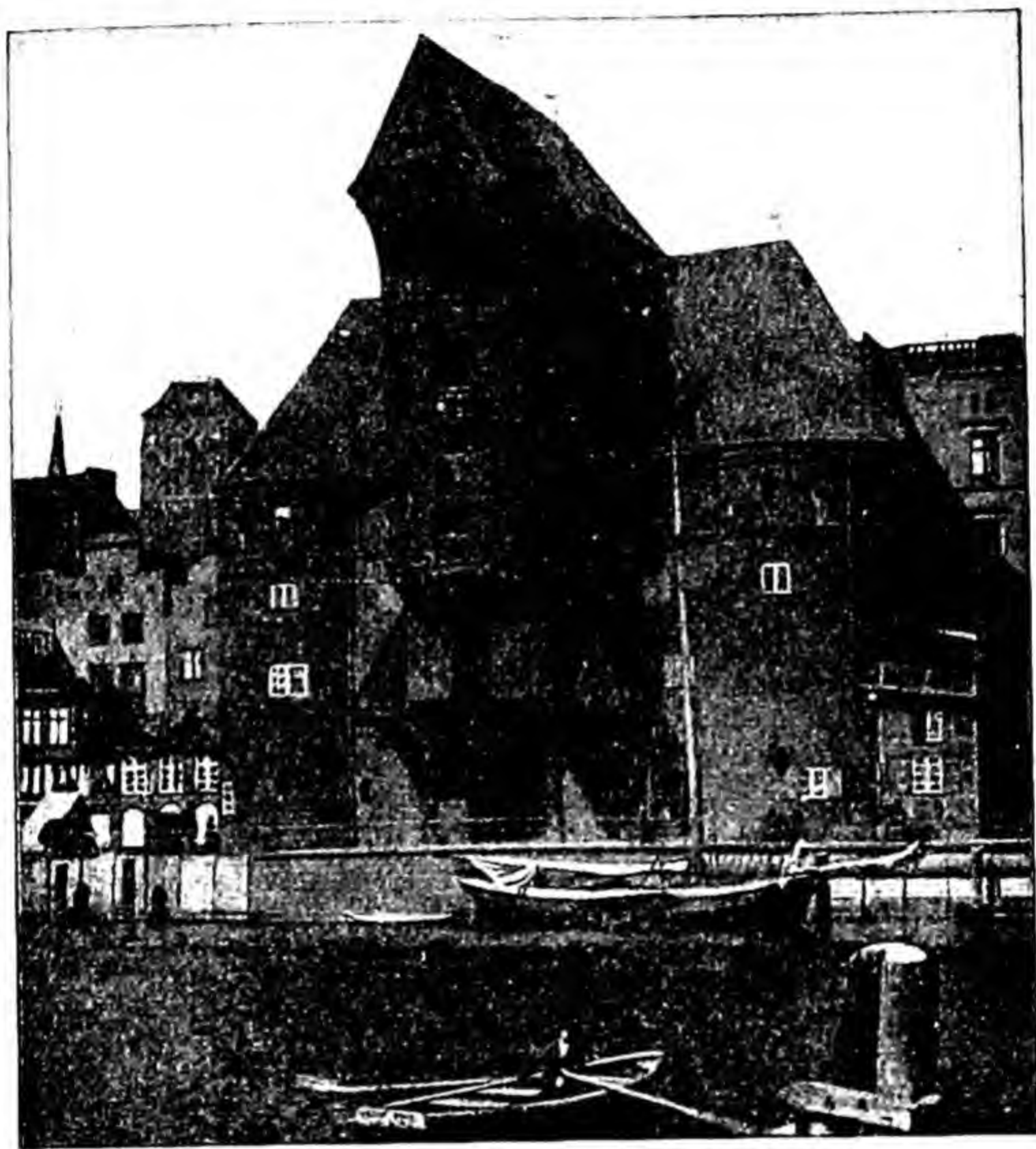
LIFE in Germany in the Middle Ages reminds us of Italy\* at the same period—robbers roaming the countryside; barons ruling like kings from their strong castles on the rocky hills, fighting their neighbours and making life miserable for the peasants.

As in Italy, the best men often fled into the towns and there engaged in trade, doing so well that the merchants of the great North German cities—Lübeck, Bremen, Hamburg, and Dantzic—were known all over Europe, and even Asia, for skill, hard work, wealth, and honest dealing. Some of these big towns joined together in a Hanse or League, so that their merchants, travelling in company by sea and land, might protect each other from pirates and robbers.

If the English merchants became supreme in the

\* See Chapter 27.

Channel, the German "Hanse fleet" ruled the North Sea—it was still sometimes called by its other name, "German Ocean," till the recent Great War.



The Krahnentor (Crane-gate) at Dantzic.

The German Hanse merchants settled in London very early. They brought over furs, copper, iron, and also Eastern luxuries which had come across Russia. From England they sent back raw wool and



hides (skins of animals). Many English merchants were jealous of them, as of all foreigners. But they could not get rid of them, for the Germans were strong and united, they knew what they wanted, and were rich enough to bargain with the English kings for special protection and privileges.

They lived together in London in what was called the "Steelyard"—a group of houses within a strong enclosure facing the Thames, where their ships could unload. These foreign merchants were sometimes called Easterlings, and their badge stamped on any goods would be accepted as a sign of honest value. Hence the phrases "pound sterling," "sterling value," "sterling" being the shortened form of "Easterling." They lived rather like monks, for they were unmarried, were lodged all together, fed at a common table, and were under strict rules.

### 32. Edward II. and the Early Years of Edward III.

Edward II., 1307-1327. Edward III., 1327-1377.

EDWARD II. was a worthless king. We have seen\* how he disobeyed his father's dying command, and stayed in England amusing himself with his favourites, while Robert Bruce was winning all Scotland. His defeat at the Battle of Bannockburn (1314), and his flight from the battlefield, were felt as a great disgrace.

The English barons were angry with Edward II. Their anger was not altogether due to patriotism, but partly to jealousy of Gaveston, a conceited young up-

\* Chapter 24, § 3.

start, who amused the king by inventing insulting nicknames for the leading barons of England. However, the barons had their revenge, for they captured Gaveston and beheaded him near Warwick, and appointed a committee from among themselves to rule for the king.



Edward III. and St. George.

*(From the effigy on the King's monument in Westminster Abbey.)*

Even this did not work well, and in the end Edward II. was deposed—that is, Parliament (led, of course, by the barons) pronounced that he was unfit to rule, and should no longer be king. He was imprisoned in Berkeley Castle and soon afterwards cruelly murdered—it was said by his wicked wife Isabella, who wished to marry Roger Mortimer, leader of the rebel barons.



It had been a miserable reign—a worthless king ; the loss of Scotland ; selfish barons always quarrelling among themselves ; and famine in the land. “ In this year (1313) there were such great rains that the wheat failed, and all other things as well.” “ In this year (1315) there was a great famine, so that people without number died of hunger ; and there was also a great pestilence among the people.”

When Edward II. was deposed and murdered (1327), his son Edward III., a boy of fifteen, was proclaimed king. But the real rule was in the hands of Queen Isabella and Mortimer. They concluded the “ shameful peace ” with Scotland, by which the English kings gave up all claim to the overlordship of Scotland in return for a large sum of money, which went into the pockets of the greedy queen and Mortimer.

England seemed worse off than ever. But the young king, Edward III., was a much stronger character than his father, and he saw no reason why he should not make himself king in fact as well as name. So he and his friends made a plot, came upon Mortimer through a secret passage in Nottingham Castle, and killed him in spite of Isabella’s cries for mercy. Isabella was imprisoned for the rest of her life, and Edward III. was now really king.

He was a handsome young man, popular with the people, very fond of all manly sports and of fighting, whether in real war or in tournaments. He loved to have everything about his court rich and splendid. When he led his people into a war with France, which brought them at first much plunder and riches and excitement, they supported him eagerly and thought there was no one like him.

### 33. The Hundred Years' War with France

#### § 1

MOST of Edward III.'s long reign of fifty years (1327-1377) was occupied by the first half of the Hundred Years' War with France. War was not, of course, going on all that time : no nation, even if successful, could endure so long a struggle. Still, for roughly a hundred years, England and France were generally "at daggers drawn," sometimes actually fighting each other, sometimes just glaring at each other, as it were, across the Channel, and getting breath for a fresh start.

They helped each other's enemies : the French king persuaded the Scottish king to invade and annoy England ; and if the Count of Flanders was rebelling against his French overlord and king, English money and influence were used in his support.

There were several reasons for this long quarrel between neighbours. The French kings had a long-standing grudge against the English kings, who had certainly been very annoying. In the days of William the Conqueror, the French king was a very feeble person indeed. He ruled only the country round Paris itself, and his great vassals—the counts and dukes of Guienne, Burgundy, Flanders, Normandy, etc.—had much more power than he had. They called him overlord, but they ruled exactly as they liked in their own dominions.

It was only very slowly, during some hundreds of years, that the kings of France gradually came to rule directly over the whole country we now call France.





- .-.- Boundary of France.  
 — Boundary of the dominion of Henry II. \*  
 ..... English boundary at Peace of Bretigny (1360). †

And the English kings were very often the most tiresome of their vassals.

Henry II. had ruled over more land in France than

\* See Chapter 9.

† See Chapter 36.



ENGLISH LADIES OF THE 14TH CENTURY.

(J. Strutt: *"Dresses and Habits of the People of England"* (1842 ed.): from illuminated MSS. in the British Museum.)

N.B.—The wimple head-dress is shown in the top picture both loose and fastened.



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the King of France himself. John, by his slackness, lost these French lands, except Guienne around Bordeaux, of which Simon de Montfort was governor for a time under Henry III. In Edward I.'s time the French king was helping the Scots against England.

## § 2

Again, English and French sailors were constantly quarrelling in the Channel. Trade was increasing. Many little merchant vessels went to and fro, bearing the valuable English wool to Flanders and carrying the finished cloth back to England. French vessels also brought wine from Gascony to England in exchange for wool and hides (skins of cattle). The fishermen of the two countries also did a fair trade. So English and French sailors were always meeting, and they did not always agree : often they had fights on their own account, even when there was supposed to be peace between the two countries.

Then, perhaps to bring matters to a crisis, Edward III. said that he ought to be King of France. He had a kind of excuse, being the son of a French princess, but the claim was not a good one, and, of course, neither the French king nor his subjects would recognize it.

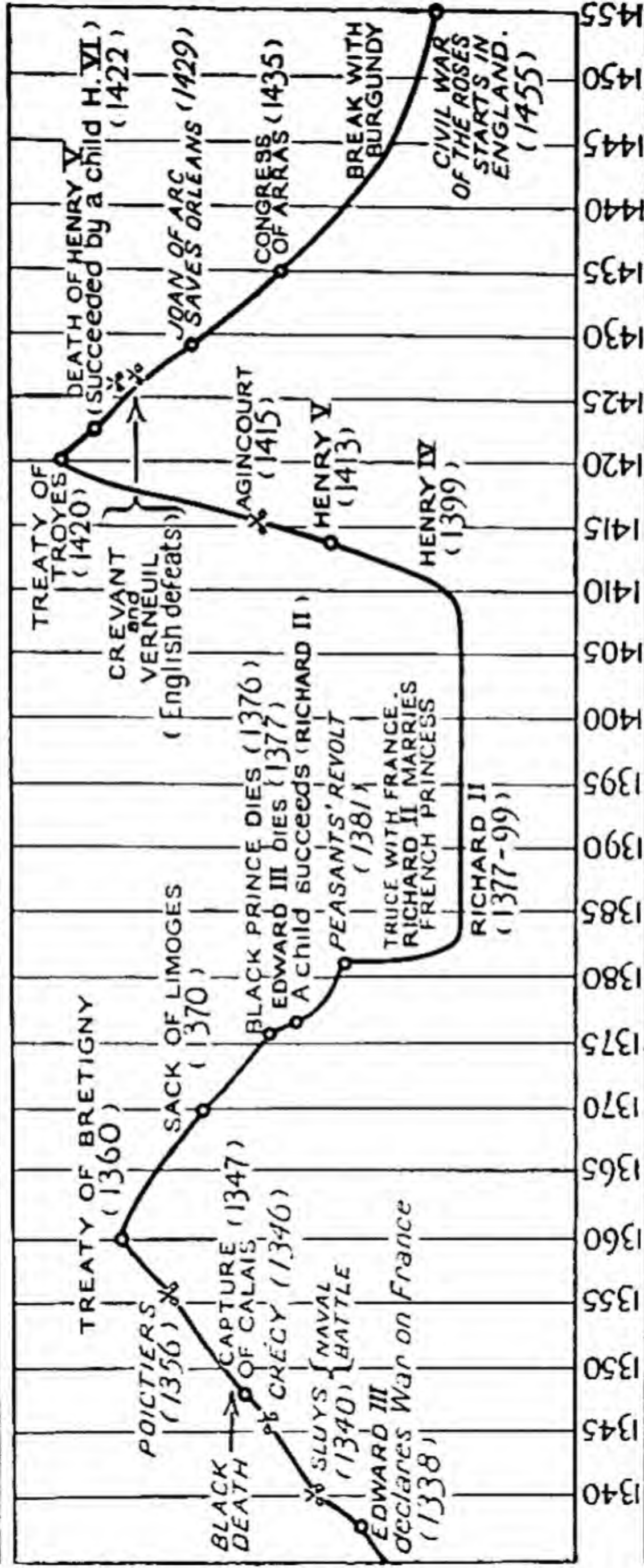
We need not follow the course of the war in detail from 1338 to 1453. It is easier to think of it in two waves, as shown on page 162.

The English won more and more victories till they reached the crest of a wave of success in 1360, then sinking back in the last years of Edward III.'s reign. Then followed a long spell of quiet.



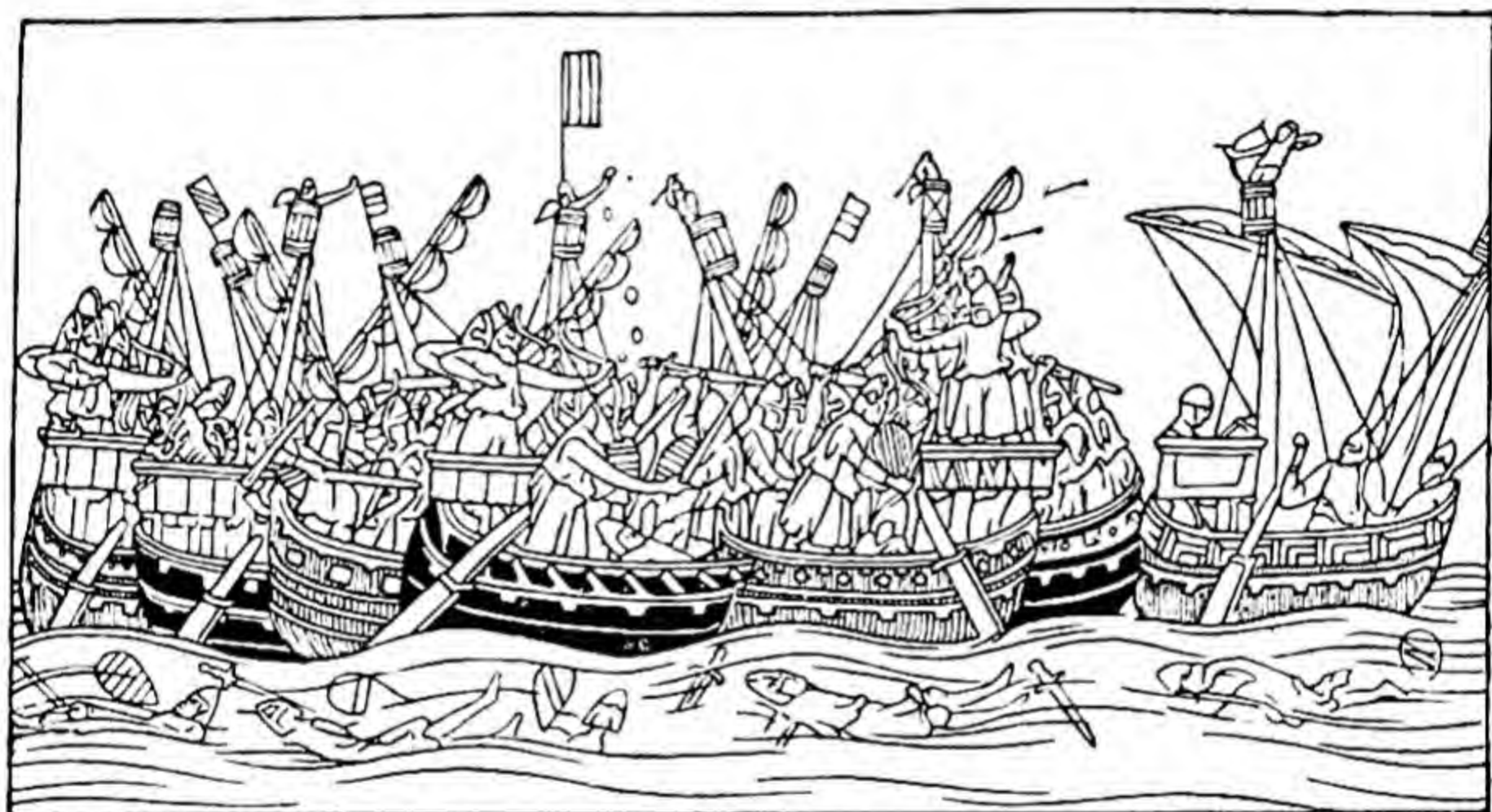
# House of History

## First Storey



UPS AND DOWNS OF THE 100 YEARS' WAR  
( CHIEF EVENTS IN ITALICS )

But the war started again under a brave and warlike King of England, Henry V., and brought such success this time that only his sudden death prevented the English king from being crowned in Paris as King of France. Finally, a wonderful deliverer came to France in the person of Joan of Arc, and the war



A sea fight between French and English.

*(From a 14th-century MS. in the British Museum.)*

ended by the English being driven out of France, except from Calais.\*

The war was fought in France itself, and on the narrow seas. Edward III.—or his generals—would take an army across to Guienne in the south-west, or to Flanders, opposite our shores, whose Count was friendly to us, and whose towns needed our wool. From these bases the army set out on a plundering expedition, venturing as far into France as it dared.

\* See Chapters 43 and 44.



The English armies did much damage, and ruined many a poor French peasant, who wanted only to be left in peace ; they never (in Edward III.'s time) reached Paris itself, nor really conquered the land they trampled under foot. They brought back much booty, in the early years at any rate ; and people at home got the idea that the war was " paying " them very well.

The English generally had a smaller army than the French, and so they avoided meeting the French too often on the field of battle. But when they were forced to turn and face their French foes, they won extraordinary victories against great odds. The most famous of these victories were Crecy (1346) in Edward III.'s reign ;\* and Agincourt (1415) in Henry V.'s reign.†

### 34. The English Navy and the Cinque Ports

#### § 1

THOUGH in the great sea-fights, off Dover (1216), and off Sluys (1340), the English were victorious over the French, yet the English kings did not keep a large navy for the defence of the country. The Saxon king Alfred had indeed started an English navy, and the early Norman kings sometimes had two or three " royal ships." But for the most part it was found much more convenient to hire merchant ships when they were wanted.

It is not until the days of Henry V. that we find a real navy—that is, royal ships built and kept especially

\* See Chapter 35.

† See Chapter 43.

for war. These ships were broad and deep, made for sailing, and for holding as much cargo (or, in war-time, as many soldiers) as possible.

The idea of a naval battle in the Middle Ages was to get close up to the enemy ship, fasten on to it with grappling irons, board her, and then fight a hand-to-hand battle, as on land. Often a wooden scaffolding was run up amidships from which archers could pour their arrows into the enemy's ship. Big stones were hurled by hand or sometimes from enormous, clumsy sort of catapults. If you could get the wind behind you, it was considered a good plan to throw quicklime into your enemy's eyes. On the *Royal Christopher* (1338) three cannon were mounted, but these were clumsy affairs as yet, likely to do as much damage to those who fired them as to the enemy. Still, the use of gunpowder was beginning in Edward III.'s time.

The most famous chronicler of the Middle Ages, Froissart, gives the following account of the Battle of Sluys (1340), which opened the Hundred Years' War, in which Froissart himself took part :

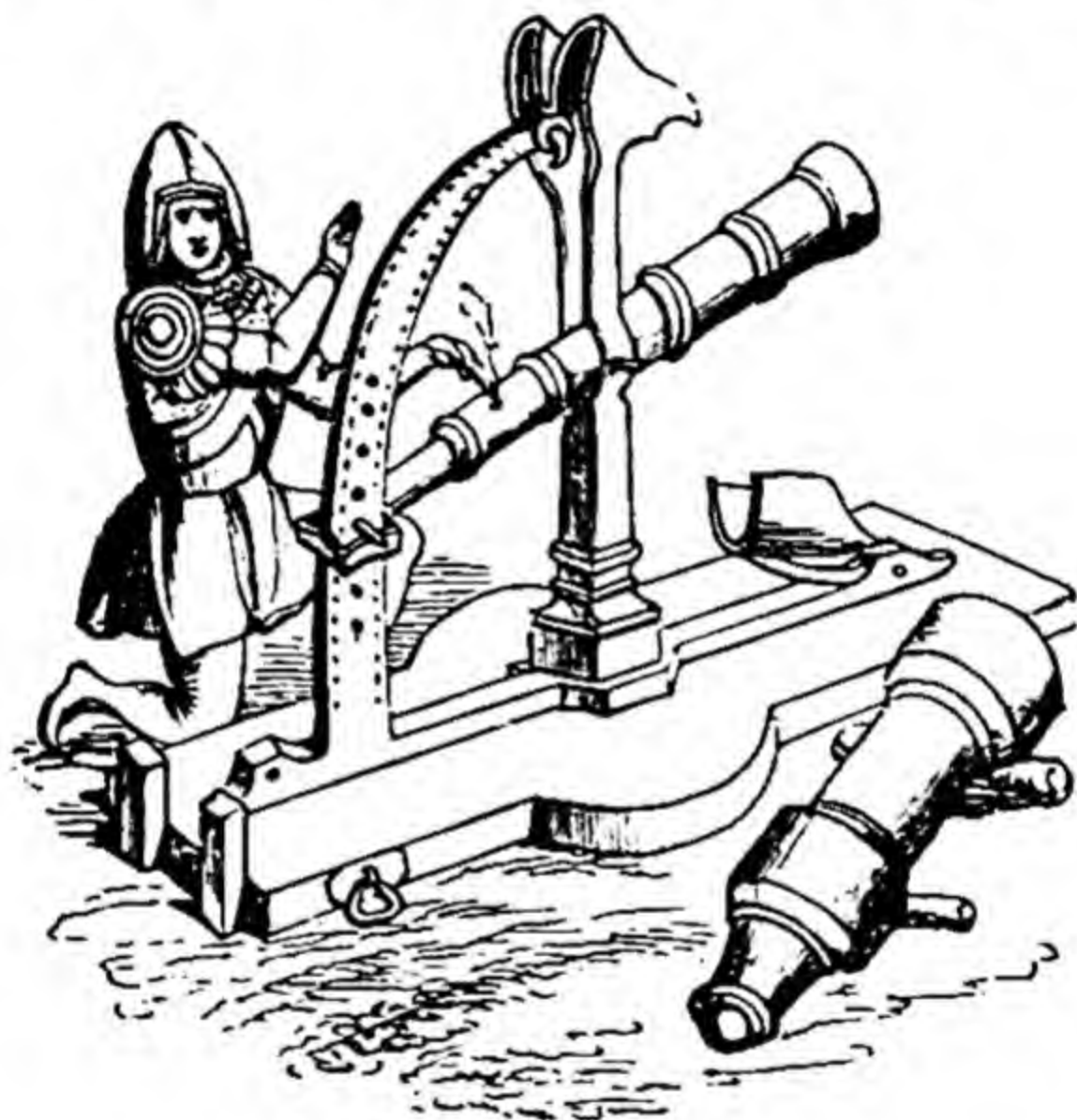
"The King of England and his men came sailing till he came before Sluys (off the coast of Holland). When he saw there so great a number of ships that their masts seemed to be like a great wood, he demanded of the master of his ship what people he thought they were ; he answered, and said, " Sir, I think they be Normans led here by the French king, and have done great displeasure in England, burnt your town of Hampton (Southampton), and taken your great ship the *Christopher*."

" ' Ah ! ' quoth the king, ' I have long desired to fight with the Frenchmen ; and now shall I fight



with some of them by the grace of God and St. George, for truly they have done me so many displeasures that I shall be revenged if I may.' ”

The English manœuvred for position “ and turned a little to get the wind at will ; and when the Normans saw them recoil back, they did marvel why they did so.



Early cannon.

(*B.M., Royal MS., 14 E iv.*)

And some said, ‘ They think themselves not meet to meddle with us ; wherefore they will go back.’ . . .

“ There began a sore battle on both parts. Archers and crossbowmen began to shoot, and men-at-arms approached and fought hand to hand ; and the better to come together they had great hooks and grappling irons to cast out of one ship into another, and so tied them fast together ; there were many deeds of arms done, taking and rescuing again.

“ And at last the great *Christopher* was first won by the Englishmen, and all that were within it taken or slain. Then there was great noise and cry, and the Englishmen approached and fortified the *Christopher* with archers, and made her to pass on to fight with the Genoese.

“ This battle was right fierce and terrible ; for the battles on the sea are more dangerous and fiercer than the battles by land. For on the sea there is no recoiling nor flying, there is no remedy but to fight and abide fortune, and for every man to show his prowess. . . . This battle endured from the morning till it was noon. . . . The Frenchmen, Normans, and others were discomfited, slain, and drowned. There was not one that escaped, but all were slain. When this victory was achieved, the king all that night abode in his ship before Sluys, with great noise of trumpets and instruments.” \*

## § 2

Now the chief ports on the south-east coast of England were known as the Cinque Ports (from the French *cinque* or five). These were the important ports of Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover, and Sandwich, all on the English Channel. To these were afterwards added Winchelsea and Rye. It was from them that the English king in the Middle Ages chiefly hired his ships in time of war.

A charter given them by Edward I. says : “ At each time that the king passeth over the seas, the ports

\* Froissart, *Chronicles*.



ought to rig up fifty-and-seven ships (whereof every one to have twenty armed soldiers) and to maintain them at their own costs, for the space of fifteen days together.”

The ships of the Cinque Ports had given a good account of themselves in the battle of Dover (1216).<sup>\*</sup> When the French prince Louis “had entered the realms” (just before King John’s death, 1216) . . . “Hubert de Burgh, then captain of Dover, . . . by the aid of the port towns, armed forty tall ships, and meeting with eighty sail of Frenchmen upon the high seas, gave them a most courageous encounter, in which he took some, sunk others, and discomfited the rest. . . .”

Again, “about the middle of the reign of Edward I., an hundred sail of the navy of the Cinque Ports fought with a fleet of two hundred Frenchmen, all which—in spite of the great numbers—they took and slew, sinking so many mariners that France was thereby, for a long season after, destitute both of seamen and shipping. . . .”

In the days of Henry IV., the navy of the Five Ports, under the conduct of one Henry Paye, surprised a hundred and twenty French ships “all laden with salt, iron, oil, and no worse merchandise.” †

The whole of the fighting on land during the Hundred Years’ War was carried on by the English on French soil; the French often tried, but never succeeded in invading England. This shows that England had the upper hand in the Channel, and it shows why the English kings were so anxious to win and keep Calais.

<sup>\*</sup> See Chapter 17.

† Hakluyt’s *Voyages of English Seamen*.

### 35. The Battle of Crecy (1346), and the Burghers of Calais

#### § I

EDWARD III., after a raid in northern France, with his army lessened by disease, was trying to get back to England. But the French caught him up near Crecy (1346), on the Somme, as he was making his way to Calais. The English were just able to ford the river by moonlight, and then turned to face the French army. They were in a good position, on the slope of a hill, their right flank protected by a stream, their left by the woods.



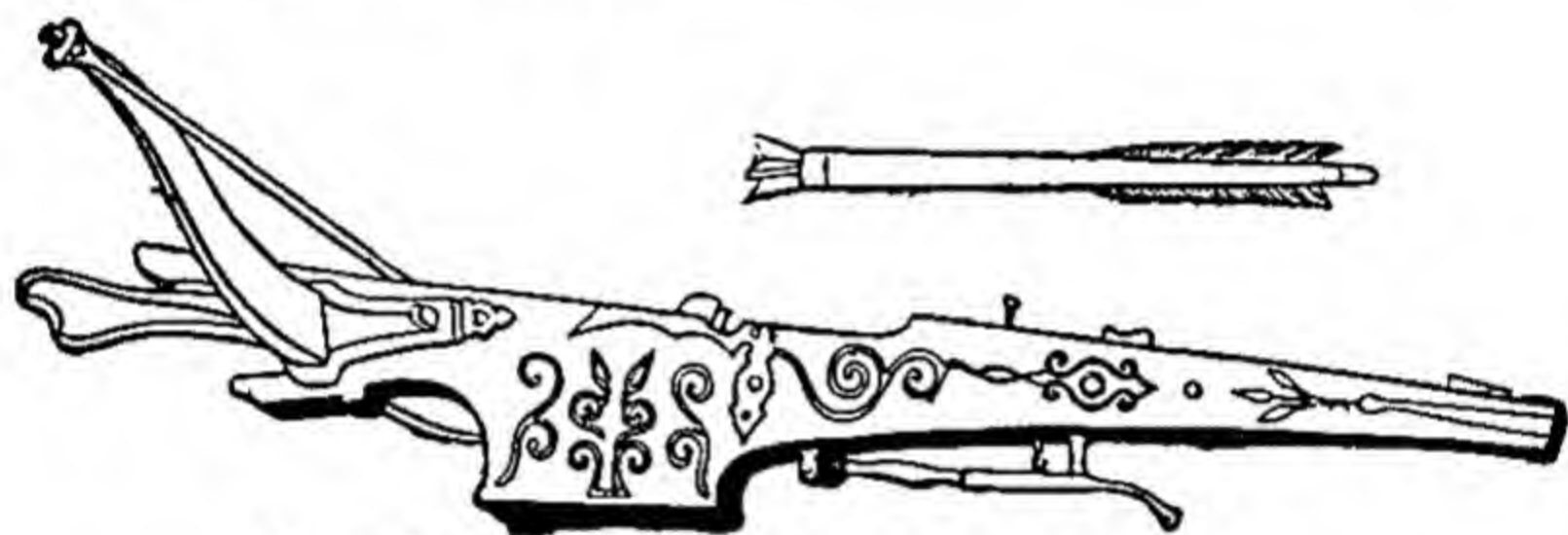
Crossbowman and archer.

“The Englishmen,” says the chronicler Froissart, “who were in three battles or divisions, were lying on the ground to rest them. As soon as they saw the Frenchmen approach, they rose upon their feet fair and easily, without any haste. . . . The lords and knights of France came not . . . together in good order, for some came before and some after, in such haste and evil order, that one of them did trouble another.

“When the French king saw the Englishmen, his blood changed ; and he said to his marshals : ‘ Make the Genoese go on before and begin the battle, in the name of God and St. Denis.’ ”



There were the Genoese crossbowmen, about 15,000, but "they were so weary of going afoot that day, armed with their crossbows, that they said to their constables: 'We be not well ordered to fight this day, for we be not in the case to do any great deed of arms; we have more need of rest.' . . . Also the same season fell a great rain . . . with terrible thunder. . . . Then the air began to wax clear, and the sun to shine fair and bright, which was right in the Frenchmen's eyes and on the Englishmen's backs.



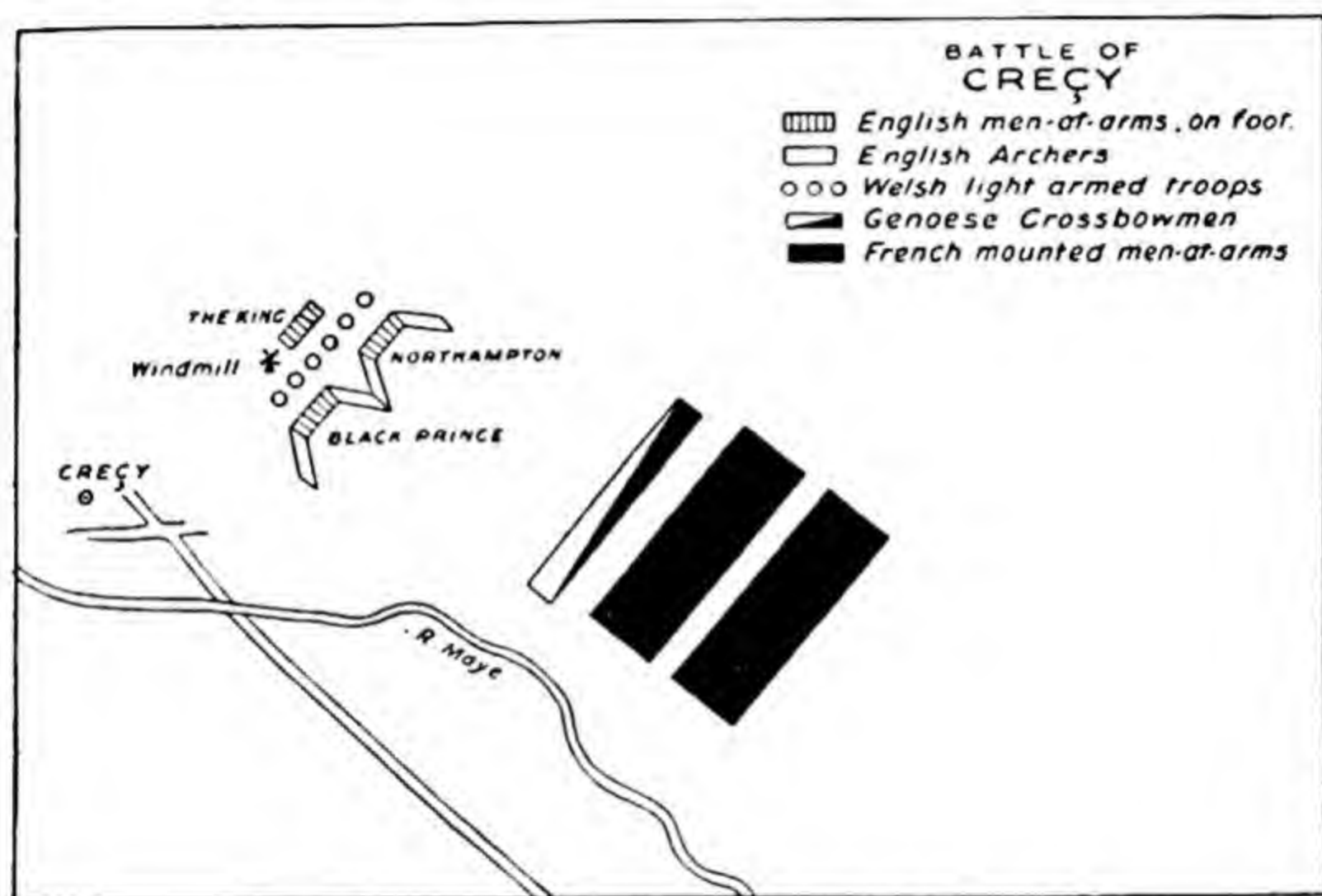
Crossbow and quarrel,\* as used at Crecy.

"When the Genoese . . . began to approach, they made a great leap and cry to abash the Englishmen, who stood still and strayed not for all that. Then the Genoese again . . . made another leap and terrible cry, and stepped forwards a little, and the Englishmen removed not one foot. Again they leaped and cried, and went forth till they came within shot, then they shot fiercely with their crossbows. Then the English archers stepped forth one pace, and let fly their arrows so wholly and so thick that it seemed snow.

"When the Genoese felt the arrows piercing through heads, arms, and breasts, many of them cast down their crossbows and did cut their strings and returned dis-

\* Short bolt used with crossbow.

comforted. When the French king saw them fly away, he said, 'Slay these rascals, for they shall let (hinder) and trouble us without reason.' Then ye should have seen the men-at-arms dash in among them and kill a great number of them ; and even still the Englishmen shot where they saw thickest place. The sharp arrows ran into the men-of-arms and into their horses, and



The English and French armies at Crecy.

many fell, horse and men, among the Genoese, and when they were down, they could not rally again. The press was so thick that one overthrew another."

The young Prince of Wales, generally called the Black Prince, it is said, from the black armour which he wore, was at one time sore pressed. His father was directing the operations from a windmill on a little hill behind the battlefield, "and they with the prince sent a messenger to the king. . . .



“ Then the knight said to the king : ‘ Sir, the Earl of Warwick and the Earl of Oxford, Sir Reynold Cobham, and other such as be about the prince your son, are fiercely fought and sore handled, wherefore they desire that you will come and aid them ; for if the Frenchmen increase, as no doubt they will, your son and they shall have much ado.’ ”

“ Then the king said : ‘ Is my son dead or hurt, or on the earth fell ? ’ ‘ No, sir,’ quoth the knight, ‘ but he is hardly matched, wherefore he hath need of your aid.’ ‘ Well,’ said the king, ‘ return to him, and to them that sent you hither, and say to them that they send no more to me for any adventure that falleth so long as my son is alive, and also say to them that they suffer him this day to win his spurs ; for if God be pleased, I will that this journey be his and the honours thereof, and to them that be about him.’ Then the knight returned again to them, and showed the king’s words, which greatly encouraged them, and they repented that they had sent to the king as they did.”

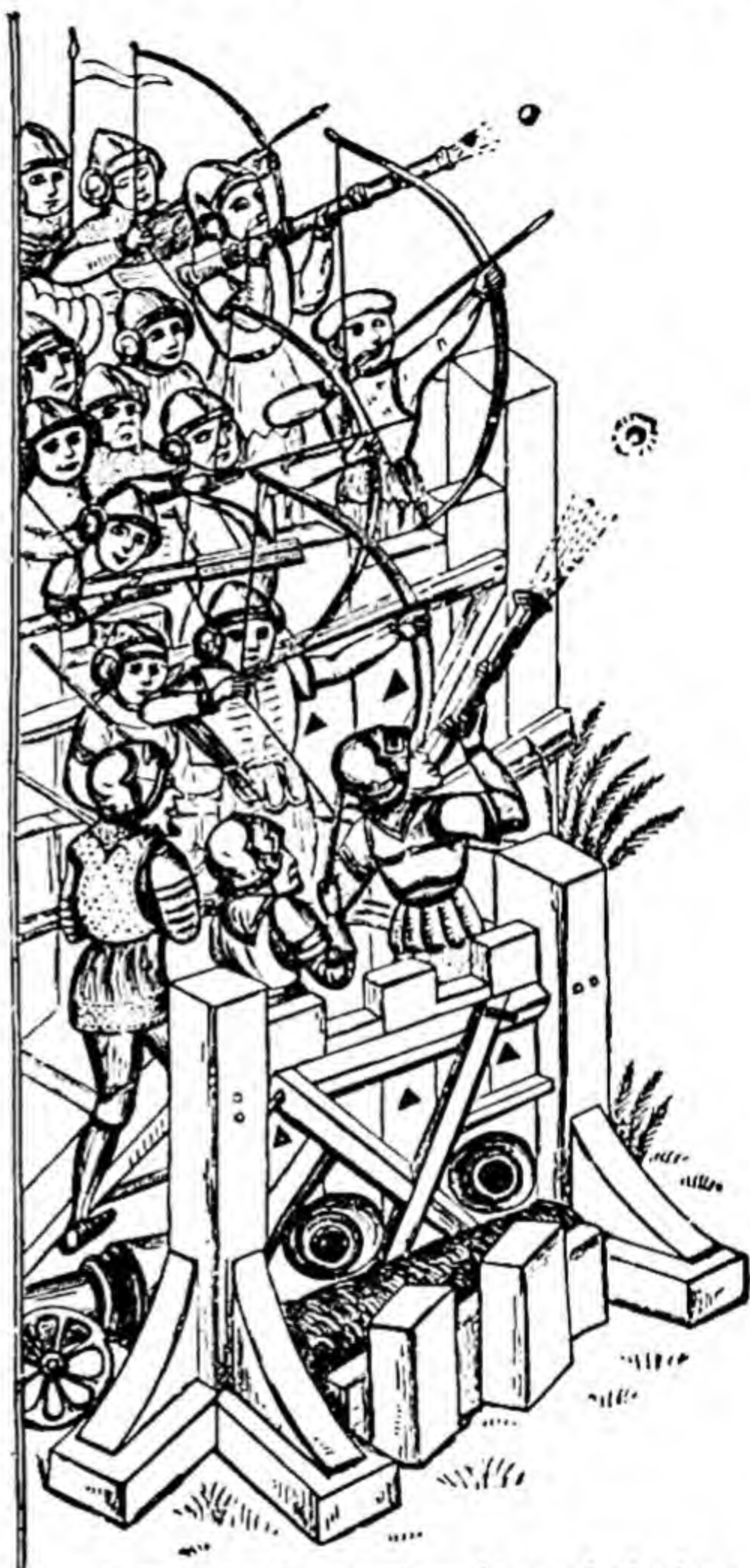
By evening the French were hopelessly defeated with heavy losses. “ So Sir John of Hainault took the French king’s horse by the bridle, and led him away in a manner perforce. Then the king rode till he came to the castle of Broy. The gate was closed, because it was by this time dark. Then the king called the captain, who came to the walls and said, ‘ Who is it that calleth there this time of night ? ’ Then the king said, ‘ Open your gate quickly, for this is the fortune of France.’ Then the captain knew it was the king, and opened the gate and let down the bridge.”

## § 2

Then Edward III. marched on and besieged Calais, a valuable fortress, and the nearest town to England. But the men of Calais held out nearly a year till they were starving. Then they sent to the English, saying :

“Now our succour hath failed us, and we be so sore strained that we have not to live withal, but that we must all die or else enrage for famine, without the noble and gentle king of yours will take mercy on us and have pity on us and let us go and depart as we be. Let him take the town and castle and all the goods therein, the which is great abundance.”

But Edward demanded that they should put themselves entirely in his power, “for they of Calais have



A temporary besieging fort of timber.  
(From Froissart's "Chronicles of England.")



done him such contraries and disputes, and hath caused him to spend so much and to lose so many of his men, that he is sore grieved against them. At last, however, he relented a little, and said, 'Let six of the chief burgesses of the town come out bareheaded, barefooted, and barelegged, and in their shirts, with halters about their necks, with the keys of the town and castle in their hands, and let them six yield themselves purely to my will, and the rest I will take to mercy.'

"Then there was lamentation in the town, but at last the richest burgess, Eustace de St. Pierre, rose and offered himself, and five others joined him. These six came, as he had commanded, and cast themselves at Edward's feet; and the English knights themselves besought the king to be generous." But he refused.

At this moment his queen, Philippa, arrived—she had just crossed the sea from England, where she had won a great victory against the Scots at Neville's Cross. "Kneeling down and sore weeping, she said, 'Oh, gentle sir, since I passed the sea in great peril I have desired nothing of you; therefore now I humbly beg you, in the honour of the Son of the Virgin Mary and for love of me, that ye will take mercy of these six burgesses.' The king beheld the queen, and stood still a space; and then said, 'Oh, dame, I give them to you to do your pleasure with them.'

"Then the queen caused them to be brought into her chamber, and made the halters to be taken from their necks, and caused them to be new clothed, and gave them their dinner. . . . Then she gave each of them six nobles,\* and made them to be brought out of the host in safety and set to their liberty."

\* Noble, a coin, usually 6s. 8d.

### 36. The Last Years of the Black Prince

THE years after Crecy a terrible plague (1348-1349) compelled both countries to cease from fighting. How-

ever, a few years later, the Black Prince led a great force out from Gascony and plundered the countryside. He was forced to fight at Poitiers (1356), where again the English won a great victory against three times their own numbers. The French king was taken prisoner, and had to pay an enormous ransom. Then the Peace of Bretigny (1360)\* was made: the English received a large province in south France—Aquitaine—and Calais in full sovereignty, but Edward III. renounced his claim to the French crown.



English man-at-arms and archer.

(From Froissart.)

After this peace the English fortunes began to fail. The Black Prince went fighting in Spain, where he lost many men and much money, and was stricken with an incurable disease. He was never the same man again.

The French war went badly for the English when

\* See map on page 160.



the Black Prince resumed it. He captured Limoges, indeed, and savagely ordered all the common people to be massacred. "There was no pity taken of the poor people who wrought never no manner of treason, yet they bought it dearer than the great personages such as had done the evil."

King Edward III. was now getting old and childish,



Mowing grass.

(*Queen Mary's Psalter, early 14th century: B.M., Royal MS., 2 B. vii.*)

and neglected to rule his kingdom, while he amused himself with his favourite, a clever woman called Alice Perrers. The English people were getting very tired of the war, which was costly. The Black Prince died in 1376. In the next year the king, his father, lay alone on his deathbed, deserted even by Alice Perrers, who ran away after stealing the rings from his fingers.

And so the French war ceased for a time, and there was an uneasy peace between the two countries for nearly forty years (1377-1413).

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WORKMEN AND RUSTICS OF THE 14TH CENTURY.

(J. Strutt: "Dresses and Habits of the People of England" (1842 ed.): from illuminated MSS. in the British Museum)

## 37. The Black Death (1348-1349)

## § I

AT this time John Bowyer was living and working as a villein in the village or manor of Limenesfield, as it is called in *Domesday Book*. John was nicknamed "the bowyer," because of his skill in making bows and arrows in his spare time. He was a keen farmer. He would have liked to spend all his time working on his own strip in the fields, and in his own little garden or "toft."

But all the year round he had to give two days' work a week to his lord, and more than that at harvest-time, just when he was extra busy with his own plot. He began to think to himself: "If my lord would let me pay him money for rent instead of my labour, it would suit me much better." For money was now beginning to be more often seen in common use in the villages.

Now John's son Ralph was doing well in London at his shoemaking, being a master craftsman with a shop of his own. The fashionable shoes of the rich people were getting so fantastically long that they had to chain up the toes to their knees, to prevent themselves from falling. They must have taken much leather and been very expensive.

Also Ralph found it easy to sell his father's bows and arrows in London to the archers who were always coming and going to and from the French war. King Edward III. and his generals were finding out the value



of these archers, and used more and more of them in their armies as the years went on.

So old John the Bowyer went to the lord of the manor, with his proposal to pay a money-rent instead of a labour-rent, and the lord agreed quite readily. There were plenty of men now in the villages, with no holdings of their own, who would



Pruning and planting trees.

*(Queen Mary's Psalter, early 14th century: B.M., Royal MS., 2 B. vii.)*

gladly work for the lord if he needed them. It was more convenient to have the money and to hire labourers when they were needed. Many other lords were doing the same thing all over England. So he agreed, and both John and his lord were satisfied with the new arrangement.

John was happy: he could now spend all his time working his own strips. He built a new wooden house for himself with the help of his sturdy younger sons. He made money by the sale of his arrows, and also by

selling the wool off the two or three sheep he managed to keep. This he sold to a merchant who shipped vast quantities of wool every year to Flanders to be made into cloth. The war in France was still going well, and the soldiers came home with plenty of money in their pockets to spend; so Ralph used to say that business was brisk in London.

## § 2

In the midst of these good times there came suddenly a dreadful disaster, the Black Death (1348-1349). This was a fearful plague which seems to have been brought from Asia by travelling merchants. Those who caught it went into a high fever, and usually died after three days' illness. The plague appeared first in a seaport in Dorsetshire (August 1348). Soon after, whole families and villages were stricken down with it. Rich and poor, men, women, and children, fled from it in terror, only to find, very often, that they had carried the infection with them.

Many towns, like Gloucester, tried to close their gates against all strangers, and lock the plague out. By November 1348 it had reached London. A few months later it had spread as far as Scotland.

The people in those days had not learned that, to be healthy, they must be clean in their habits and surroundings. They had no drains, and no pure water supply, and their wood and mud hovels were very dirty.

The Black Death carried off from a third to a half of the whole population. Sometimes whole villages



were wiped out. All classes suffered ; and of the priests, " a multitude known to God only " lost their lives, says an old chronicler. The priests mostly kept on bravely with their work, nursing the sick in their parishes till they themselves were stricken down.

### § 3

Old John the Bowyer died and all his sons, except the youngest, Will, who ran away in terror and hid himself in Ralph's London shop far from the lord of the manor. For when the summer of 1349 came, and the plague was slackening somewhat, the lord had anxious talk with his bailiff. Half of the villeins had died, and many of the rest had disappeared, the corn was rotting in the fields waiting for harvesters, cows were wandering about un milked, fences were broken down—ruin stared him in the face.

The few hired men that were left were now asking sixpence a day. Even if he could pay them all, there were not enough men left to do the necessary work.

Then his bailiff suggested that if they hunted up the old parchment rolls of the manor, they would find written down what services each man owed, and they could enforce these as in the old days. So, in desperation, the lord sent messengers far and wide : he even sent up to London and tried to drag back Ralph and his brother Will. But Ralph they could not touch, for the law said that any man who had lived for a year and a day in a walled town, without his lord demanding his services, was free for ever.

They dragged back Will and forced him to do the work his father had done, and much more besides. He was sullenly angry: he escaped again, but they captured him, branded him with an F "for his falsity," and set him to work once more.

But the lords had to rely mostly on hired labour, and they were so keen to get it that if a stranger came



Two youths sowing corn, and a man leading a horse with a sack on its back.

(*Queen Mary's Psalter, early 14th century: B.M., Royal MS., 2 B vii.*)

and offered himself, they did not stop to inquire if he were a neighbour's runaway villein, but engaged him gladly, asking no questions. They grumbled at the high wages he asked, but they had to pay them or do without him.

#### § 4

The Parliament, which consisted mainly of the landlords, passed laws called the Statutes of Labourers (1349-1351), forbidding men to ask or to give more



than the old wages. It also tried to fix all prices of food at the old level. It threatened cruel punishments for runaway villeins. Any boy who had started working on the land before he was twelve must become a labourer.

In the towns where many workmen had died, labour was just as scarce and foodstuffs more difficult to get than in the country. So the Statutes laid down that ". . . all workmen shall bring openly in their hands to the merchant towns their tools, and there shall be hired in a common place and not private. . . . None of them shall go out of the town where he dwelleth in the winter, to serve in the summer if he may serve in the same town. . . . Carpenters, masons, and tilers, and other workmen of houses shall not take pay by the day for their work, but as they were wont to do (before the Plague), that is to say, a master carpenter three pence," and so on.

But the Statutes could not accomplish their objects, though they stirred up bitter anger in the hearts of the villeins. People were growing disgusted too at the long-drawn-out French war, and at the extravagance of King Edward III.'s court, where large sums were spent on tournaments, pageants, and plays.

Men hated John of Gaunt, the king's third son, who now held the chief power, as his father was getting too old to govern. They grumbled loudly at the taxes, which grew heavier every year to pay for the French war and for the king's pleasures.

Edward III. died in 1377. The new king, Richard II., son of the Black Prince, was only a boy, and the chief power was still in the hands of John of Gaunt. Then the Government demanded (1380) a poll-tax,

that is, a tax of so much per "poll" or head. This tax of 1s. on every member of the household over fifteen meant about a week's wages at the legal rate, and, of course, bore much harder on the poor than the rich.

In fact, it was so harsh that whole villages combined to cheat the tax collectors as to the number of people who should pay it; and when some of the collectors pointed out the fraud, they were set upon and murdered. This tax was the immediate cause of the great Peasants' Revolt of 1381.\*

### 38. The England of Chaucer and Edward III.

Edward III. ruled, 1327-1377. Chaucer lived, 1340-1400.

#### § I

THE story of Chaucer, the first great English poet, shows how important the merchants were becoming in the days of Edward III. (1327-1377) and his grandson Richard II. (1377-1399).

John Chaucer, the poet's father, was a vintner or wine merchant who lived in London. He prospered at his trade, and his young son, Geoffrey, became a page, and then a squire in the household of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, Edward III.'s second son. With Duke Lionel, young Geoffrey went to the French wars when he was about nineteen, and was unlucky enough to be taken prisoner. The king himself paid his ransom. After this Geoffrey seems to have been attached to the court, amusing the fine lords and ladies

\* See Chapter 40.



with the verses he was always stringing together — love stories, romances, ballads, and sonnets.

He was made Controller of Customs, and had to go every day to the London docks to see that the king's

customs—one sack of wool and one barrel of wine off each ship—were properly collected. Later on he had to see to the rebuilding and repair of Westminster and other royal palaces. He was a cheerful, kindly man, fond of a joke and of good company, and usually looking on the bright side of things. He was also passionately fond of books. He says of himself, "When thy labour is all done, and thou hast made thy reckonings, instead of resting or doing something fresh, thou goest straight home to thy house, and there,



Geoffrey Chaucer.

dumb as a stone, thou sittest over another book until thou art fully dazed ! ”

But sometimes Nature called him out of doors :

“ When the month of May is come, and I hear the birds sing, and the flowers are beginning to spring forth ; then farewell my book and my devotion (to reading) ! ”

He wrote many poems, but his most famous one is called the *Canterbury Tales*. It tells how he, like

many other people, when the pleasant spring weather came, resolved to go on a pilgrimage to Canterbury, to the shrine of St. Thomas (Becket).\*

In those days it was a four days' journey on horseback from London. He slept the first night at the famous Tabard Inn in Southwark,† where he fell in with a jovial company of twenty-nine other pilgrims all going the same way. They agreed to travel together, for greater safety against robbers, and to pass the time by each telling two stories. He who was judged to have told the best tale was to be treated to a supper on his return.



A Pilgrim's token: showing a head of St. Thomas of Canterbury, with a Latin inscription *Caput Thome* (the head of Thomas).

## § 2

The most interesting part of the poem to us is the Prologue, in which Chaucer describes the pilgrims, a mixed company, such as might often have been met on a "Pilgrim's Way" in England of those days. There is the Knight, that from the time when he first began,

"A worthy man, to ride out, loved chivalry,  
Truth and honour, freedom and courtesy,  
He never yet said anything scandalous or unworthy  
Of a knight, to any man of any sort. He was a  
Very perfect, gentle knight."

With him there rode his son, a young Squire about twenty years of age, "with curly locks," and a gay robe "embroidered all full of fresh flowers, white and red, like a meadow. He went singing or playing

\* See Chapter 10.

† See page 257.



the flute all day, and was as merry as the month of May."

There was too an Archer from the French wars, "clad in coat and hood of green, bearing a sheaf of peacock arrows bright and keen, under his belt . . . with a sword and buckler at one side and a dagger on the other." He knew all about woodcraft, no feather was out of place on his arrows, and he had a round head like a nut, with a sunburnt face.

There was a Prioress, with dainty table manners: "She let no morsel fall from her lips, nor wet her fingers in the sauce, nor did she leave any grease in her cup when she had drunk!" She had some little pet dogs that she pampered with milk and the best roast meat; and she wept if any one smacked them! In spite of her nun's dress and vow of poverty, her cloak was of fine stuff, and she wore a coral bracelet with a gold pendant to it.

There was a Monk also, who did not trouble much about his vows of poverty and staying in a cloister; his cloak was fur-lined, and his chief amusement was hunting. Chaucer rather sympathizes with him:

"He gave not for that text a pulled hen  
That saith that hunters are not holy men;  
Nor that a monk, when he is cloisterless,  
Is likened to a fish that is waterless."

Yet Chaucer sees and respects real holiness of life in the Poor Parson of a town who could be contented with very little. His parish was wide, and houses far apart, but he never ceased, in rain or thunder, to visit all men in his parish, rich or poor, when they were in sickness or any trouble, trudging along with his staff



SIX OF THE "CANIERBURY PILGRIMS."

The Knight, the Squire, the Parson, the Prioress, the Wife of Bath, and the Clerk of Oxford

(From the Ellesmere MS. of "The Canterbury Tales.")



in his hand. He gave a noble example to his flock, always doing first what he taught others to do. And though he was holy and virtuous, he did not despise erring men. His business was to draw men to heaven by kindness and a good example. But a man who was obstinate in his sins, he would "snub sharply," for his own good.

The Parson's brother, a Ploughman, was a good man too : " God loved he best with his whole heart, at all times, whether he gained or lost thereby ; and next, he loved his neighbour as himself. He would thresh and dig and work for any poor man, without any reward, for Christ's sake, to help a neighbour in distress."

Then there was the fat, rich Wife of Bath—a widow who managed her late husband's cloth-making business so well that she surpassed the cloth-makers of Ypres and Gaunt (or Ghent)—two famous cloth-making towns in Flanders. Like all fashionable women of the time, she wore an elaborate head-dress, which Chaucer guesses " must have weighed ten pounds ! " Her stockings were bright red, and her shoes " full moist and new." Her face was bold and red.

There was also a Merchant, wearing a Flemish beaver-hat, and various craftsmen—a haberdasher, a carpenter, a weaver, and a dyer—all members of a Guild. These were prosperous men ; their knives were silver-mounted, and their girdles and pockets filled with silver. Any one of them was " fit to have been an alderman," and Chaucer thinks their wives would have been well pleased. " It is full fair to be called ' Madam,' and go into church before every one else, and have a train carried by page-boys." These men

were so well-to-do that they brought their own expert cook with them.

And there was a Doctor, who had grown rich in the Plague years; also a Man of Law, and a Miller, who rode in front of the procession, playing the bagpipes.

### 39. Wycliffe and the Lollards

Wycliffe died, 1384.

NOT all parishes, in town and country, had an earnest priest like Chaucer's "poor parson." Often a neighbouring monastery was supposed to provide for their needs, but many of the monks were getting idle, selfish, and pleasure-loving. Sometimes they would send one of their number to the church to gabble through the services on Sunday, and leave the parish alone during the week.

Sometimes, instead, they appointed a Vicar—which means a substitute—to take their place, but they paid him such a miserable stipend that he was obliged to farm during the week to get a living. In neither case did the people get very much teaching. Again, there was such a shortage of priests after the Black Death that many men with very little learning were ordained as priests.

And many of the friars were no longer the earnest and devoted teachers of the poor, as had been the early followers of St. Francis. They were often jolly beggars, whose chief concern was to fill their own pockets. They frightened the poor people with their



sermons, and, like the pardoners, told them they could escape punishment after death by paying money. Chaucer has a Friar who taught :

“ Instead of weeping and of prayers, we must give money to the poor friars.”

The higher clergy—bishops and abbots—were getting into their hands more and more wealth. And so, sad to say, the Church, as it gained more wealth and power, ceased to do as much good for the people.



John Wycliffe.

There was one man living in the time of Edward III. and Chaucer who was much troubled by this change in the Church. His name was John Wycliffe. He was a very learned man and Master of Balliol College, Oxford. Later he gave up this position to be a parish priest at Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, and he was shocked to

find how ignorant the people were.

Towards the end of his life Wycliffe trained a band of “ poor preachers ” to go about the country to teach the people. To help them and others he translated (with the help of other scholars) the Gospels from Latin into English, so that his preachers might understand the faith they were teaching others.

Wycliffe believed that the rich clergy should pay taxes and bear their share of the country's burden like ordinary people. He taught that great men, clergy or

laymen, were responsible to God for the laws they made in Parliament, and for the use they made of their money. Some of his followers misunderstood his teaching. They went much further and said that bad laws should not be obeyed, and that wicked rich men should be forcibly deprived of their riches, or that there should be no rich and poor. It is easy to understand how eagerly the peasants might listen to such teaching.

Wycliffe's "poor preachers" were sometimes called Lollards (*i.e.* talkers in a sing-song manner) by their enemies. They so increased in number till, before Chaucer's death (1400), it was said that if you saw five men talking together, two of them were certain to be Lollards.

And so, in Wycliffe's days, began a change in the Church, which in later times became the "Reformation." Wycliffe himself is often called the "Morning Star of the Reformation."

## 40. The Peasants' Revolt

Richard II., 1377-1399.

### § 1

ABOUT this time of unrest, new and strange ideas were being whispered abroad. There was in Kent a priest called John Ball. "He used oftentimes on Sundays, after Mass, when the people were going out of the minster, to go into the cloister and preach, and made the people to assemble about him, and would say thus:



“ Ah, ye good people, the matters goeth not well to pass in England, nor shall not do till everything be common, and that there be no villeins nor gentlemen,



John Ball addressing the people.

*(From an early MS. of Froissart's Chronicles.)*

but that we may be all united together, and that the lords be no greater masters than we be. What have we deserved, or why should we be kept thus in servage? We be all come from one father and one mother, Adam and Eve. . . .

“They are clothed in velvet, and we be vested with poor cloth : they have their wines, spices, and good bread, and we have the rye, the bran, and the straw, and drink water : they dwell in fair houses, and we have pain and travail, rain and wind in the fields.

“Let us go to the king, he is young,\* and show him what servage we be in, and show him how we will have it otherwise, or else we will provide us of some remedy ; and if we go together, all manner of people that be now in any bondage will follow us. . . .”

Others in different parts of the country were saying the same kind of thing. And though there were no letters or telegrams in those days, and travelling was so slow, the news of preparations for a great rising seemed to spread as if by magic round the South and in the Midlands of England. Town workmen and runaway villeins wandering along the roads, passed on secret passwords from one to another. Quaint verses were heard which may have had some secret meaning, such as :

“John the Miller hath ground small, small, small,  
The King's Son of Heaven shall pay for all.”

## § 2

“Then the men of Kent, of Essex, of Sussex, of Bedford, and of the counties about, rose and came towards London to the number of 60,000. And they had a captain called Wat Tyler, and with him in company was Jack Straw and John Ball. These three

\* Fourteen years old : this was Richard II., son of the Black Prince, and king from 1377 to 1399.



were chief sovereign captains, but the head of all was Walter Tyler. . . . When these unhappy men began thus to stir, they of London, except such as were of their band, were greatly afraid.

“Then the Mayor of London and the rich men of the city took counsel together, and when they saw the people thus coming in on every side, they caused the gates of the city to be closed, and would suffer no man to enter into the city. But . . . they thought they should thereby put their suburbs in great peril to be brent (*i.e.* burnt), so they opened again the city, and there entered in at the gates, in some places a hundred, two hundred, by twenty and thirty ; and so when they came to London, they entered and lodged ; and yet of truth, most of their people could not tell what to ask—but followed each other like beasts. . . . And as they came they asked ever for the king.

“The gentlemen of the counties, knights and squires, began to doubt when they saw the people begin to rebel, so the gentlemen drew together as best they might. . . .

“(The rebels) that were at Canterbury entered into St. Thomas’s church, and did there much hurt, and robbed and broke up the bishop’s chamber. . . . In the morning on Corpus Christi Day, King Richard heard Mass in the Tower of London, and all his lords, and then he took his barge with the Earl of Salisbury . . . and certain knights, and so rowed down along the Thames to Rotherhithe, where were descended down the hill 10,000 men to see the king and speak with him.

“And when they saw the king’s barge coming they began to shout and make such a cry, as though all the

devils of hell had been among them. . . . And when the king and his lords saw the demeanour of the people, the best assured of them were in dread, and so the king



King Richard II. goes to talk to the rebels.

*(From an early MS. of Froissart's Chronicles.)*

was counselled by his barons not to take any landing there, but so rowed and down the river. . . .

“Then all (the rebels) cried out: ‘Let us go to London,’ and so they took their way thither; and in their going they beat down abbeys and houses of



lawyers and of men of the court, and so came into the suburbs of London, which was great and fair, and there beat down divers fair houses, and especially they brake up the king's prisons . . . and delivered out all the prisoners that were therein. . . .

"The rebels' friends inside London forced the gates to be opened to them ; so they rushed in, sacking, burning, and plundering, and they came to the Savoy (palace), which belonged to (John of Gaunt), the Duke of Lancaster. And when they entered they slew the keepers thereof, and robbed and pillaged the house, and when they had so done, then they set fire on it, and clean destroyed and brent (burnt) it. . . . Then they went from street to street, and slew all the Flemings that they could find."

### § 3

"Then the young king rode out to meet them at Mile End, and said to them sweetly, 'Oh, ye good people, I am your king: what lack ye? What will ye say?'

"Then such as understood him said: 'We will that ye make us free forever, ourselves, our heirs, and our lands, and that we be called no more bond, nor so reputed.'

"Sirs,' said the king, 'I am well agreed thereto. Withdraw you home into your own houses . . . and leave behind you of every village two or three, and I shall cause writings to be made, and seal them with my seal, which they shall have with them. containing everything that ye demand.' " \*

\* Froissart's *Chronicles*.

These words pleased the simple people, and many of them began to return home. But some 30,000 still remained under Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and John



Wat Tyler for his insolence is killed by Walworth.

*(From an early MS. of Froissart's Chronicles.)*

Ball. The king came out next morning to meet these at Smithfield. Wat Tyler rode up to him and began to speak to him in a threatening manner. He started quarrelling with a squire who stood near, and Walworth (the Mayor of London) was so enraged that he



"drew out his sword, and strake Tyler so great a stroke on the head that he fell down at the feet of his horse ; . . . then a squire of the king . . . drew out his sword . . . and put it through Tyler's body."

The people began to murmur angrily, and the archers even aimed their arrows at the king ; but Richard rode forward alone, saying : "Sirs, what aileth you ? Ye shall have no captain but me ; I am your king : be all in rest and peace." The people admired his courage, they cheered him loudly, and turned to go home.

Such is the story of the Great Revolt of the Peasants as told by the chronicler, Froissart, who was living at the time, and was by no means friendly to the peasants.

But the young king's Parliament and Council would not let him keep his promise. The charters of freedom were not sent out ; pardons were cancelled ; and the old punishments against villeins—branding or the stocks or imprisonment—were put in force more savagely than ever.

Still, the wiser lords had learned a lesson, and they tried to see how to make the best of the new order of things.

Within the next hundred years villeinage practically died out in England. Nearly all men became free to hire themselves out as labourers for money wages in the modern way, or to pay money rents as tenants or holders of the farms.

But it was hundreds of years before villeinage or serfdom died out in Europe—and it is only in our own days that it has ceased in the vast land of Russia.

## 41. "That sweet, lovely rose"—

(SHAKESPEARE: *Richard II.*)

Richard II., 1377-1399.

EDWARD III. had altogether seven sons. When he died in 1377 the little prince, Richard of Bordeaux—son of the late king's eldest son, the Black Prince—came to the throne as Richard II.

He reigned while England was resting from the French wars, while Chaucer was writing his best poems, while Wycliffe and his "poor preachers" were spreading new ideas, and while the peasants were murmuring against the lords who were trying to force them back to the old conditions before the Black Death.

There was much that was lovable about Richard II. He was handsome like his father, fond of poetry, of books and jewels and all beautiful things, interested in Wycliffe's teaching, clever in his way, frank and winning in his manners, and a most tender-hearted husband to his first wife, Anne of Bohemia, who was devoted to him. He was distracted with grief at her death. But when, a few years later, his ministers thought it good policy that he should marry little Princess Isabella of France, he was very gentle and kind to his child-wife.

Richard II. had proved his courage at the Peasants' Revolt (1381) when he was but fourteen and already a king, and there were years of his reign when he showed that he could be a wise and good ruler.





Sir John Froissart presents his book to Richard II.

*(From an early MS. of Froissart's Chronicles.)*

But he was impulsive and changeable, and men never knew what he was going to do next. He was not the right king for England in those difficult years of change. He had a dark, reckless side to his nature,

which at times seemed suddenly to get the better of him. Some people said that he began to have fits of madness after the death of his beloved Queen Anne. Certainly, when the Earl of Arundel arrived late at the funeral, Richard II., enraged at the insult, drew his sword against him, and the nobles had to pull them apart.

Later, Richard II. seemed to behave sometimes like a tyrant: he even said once that the laws were in his own breast, and that he could make what new ones he liked. Like Edward II., he offended the nobles of ancient family, who considered it their right to be consulted about the government of the country. He would be great friends with them one day, and banish them the next, making the excuse of old crimes which every one else had forgotten.

At last he went too far. He was jealous and afraid of his first cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, son of John of Gaunt, and he suddenly banished him from the kingdom on a flimsy pretext. Then, when Bolingbroke's father died, Richard II. seized all his lands for himself, though he had promised to keep them for his cousin till he returned from banishment. Bolingbroke was the biggest landholder in England—he was Earl of Derby and Leicester, Duke of Hereford, and Duke of Lancaster.

Richard II. was in desperate want of money, but he had done a very foolish thing. Bolingbroke returned without leave, his brother nobles flocked to his side, and in a few weeks Richard, deserted by his subjects, was a prisoner in Flint Castle. Parliament then proclaimed him unfit to rule; and they deposed him, as they had deposed Edward II. They made



Bolingbroke king as Henry IV. (1399-1413), the first king of the family or House of Lancaster.

Soon afterwards, Richard II. died mysteriously, probably murdered like Edward II. He left no son, but there was a little boy cousin, Edmund Mortimer, who had a better claim to the throne than Bolingbroke. He was passed over now, because no one wanted a boy-king.

## 42. Renewal of the Hundred Years' War— The Sufferings of the French

Henry IV., 1399-1413. Henry V., 1413-1422.

Henry VI., 1422-1461.

FRANCE suffered far more than England during the Hundred Years' War. All the fighting was done on her soil, and French and English generals alike thought nothing of marching their soldiers through the standing corn, and billeting them on the peasants,\* often without payment. The English soldiers plundered and looted the houses of the well-to-do, and carried back in triumph to England gold and silver ornaments, vessels from the churches, fine linen sheets, new feather mattresses, silks and velvets for their wives, and money for themselves.

Later on, the French generals, when they could not beat the English, discovered that it was a good plan to keep on retiring before them, burning the corn in the fields, and destroying or carrying off the provisions

\* *i.e.*, forcing the peasants to lodge the soldiers.



Besieging a French town at the end of the Hundred  
Years' War.

*(From Froissart's picture of the siege of Dieppe by Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, 1442-43.)*



they found, so as to starve the English enemy. This was very unpleasant for the English, but still more so for the luckless French peasants, who saw their living destroyed.

In the intervals of peace, disbanded soldiers roamed the countryside, making a living by highway robbery. So miserable were the peasants in France that once they rose, as in England in 1381, in savage revolt, capturing many of the castles of the nobles, and killing and burning without mercy. But the revolt was put down with equally savage cruelty, and things were no better afterwards. \*

There was uneasy peace between the two countries for nearly forty years after the death of Edward III. (1377). Then Richard II. (1377-1399) married a French princess.

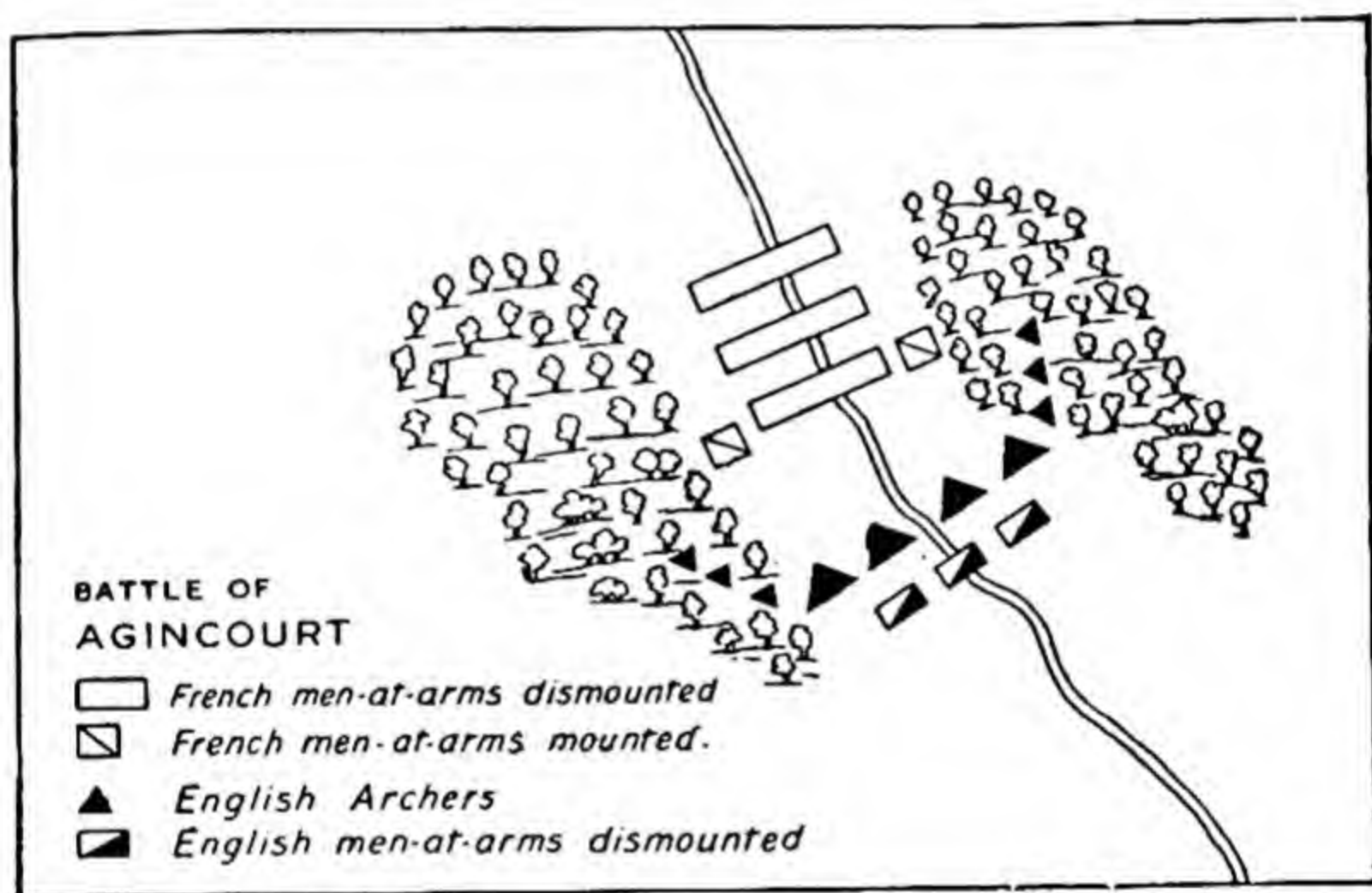
His successor, Henry IV. (1399-1413), had too many troubles at home to be able to renew the French war. The barons who had put Henry IV. on the throne thought themselves his equal, and gave him frequent trouble, especially the great family of the Percies, Earls of Northumberland. They joined with a Welsh prince, Owen Glendower, and rebelled more than once. Parliament, which had given him the crown, grew bolder in its demands for power.

Henry IV. died in 1413, and was succeeded by his son, Henry V. (1413-1422). Many stories were told of this young man's wildness when Prince of Wales; but when he became king, he settled down to be a king whom the people greatly admired. (See Shakespeare's play, *Henry V.*)

\* This revolt is called the "Jacquerie," from *Jacques*, a common name for a French peasant.

### 43. Henry V. and the Victory of Agincourt (1415)

PARTLY to please the English and to keep his barons occupied, the new king, Henry V. (1413-1422), renewed the French war. He was a born general, and his



Disposition of English and French forces at Agincourt.

march through France was a triumphal progress, as in the old days of Edward III. and the Black Prince.

Like them, he was finally caught by a huge French army, many times as big as his own, and he was forced to fight at Agincourt (1415), not very far from Crecy. Like them, he inflicted a great defeat on the French.

Shakespeare (who lived later, in Elizabeth's reign) tells how, the night before the battle, the young king, disguised as a common soldier, went round the dimly



lit tents of his men, joining in their talk and cheering them. The Duke of Westmoreland wished that a few of the thousands of Englishmen then sleeping snugly in their beds at home, could come and help them. And Shakespeare makes Henry V. answer :

“ If we are mark'd to die, we are enow (enough)  
To do our country loss ; and if to live,  
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.  
God's peace ! I would not lose so great an honour  
As one man more, methinks, would share with me,  
For the best hope I have. O ! do not wish one more ;  
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,  
That he which hath no stomach for this fight,  
Let him depart. . . .  
This day is called the feast of Crispian :  
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,  
Will stand a-tiptoe when this day is named,  
And rouse him at the name of Crispian. . . .  
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,  
From this day to the ending of the world,  
But we in it shall be remembered.  
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers ;  
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother ; be he ne'er so vile,  
This day shall gentle his condition :  
And gentlemen in England now abed  
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,  
And hold their manhoods cheap while any speaks  
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.”

After the battle at Agincourt, Henry V. went from victory to victory. France at this time was divided into two parties—the followers of the Duke of Burgundy, and the followers of the Duke of Orleans ; and so bitter was the hatred between them that the Burgundians actually joined the side of the English king, their country's enemy.

Their help was very useful to Henry ; and five years after Agincourt (1420) he rode into Paris at the head of his army. A treaty was made by which it was arranged that Henry V. should marry Katharine, daughter of that French king, Charles VI., who was hopelessly insane. Henry V. was to act as regent during Charles's madness, and to succeed him on his death as King of France.



The English cause was indeed at its height. Suddenly, however, Henry V. fell ill, and died at the early age of thirty-three. His son, Henry VI., was only a baby ; so his brother, the King Henry V. and Occleve the poet. Duke of Bedford, a good and wise man, was left to rule England and France.

*(From a contemporary MS.)*

The Orleanists were still prepared to fight for their country. They had an army in Southern France ; and at once they proclaimed the Dauphin (eldest son of the last king) as Charles VII. He was a feeble and idle young man, whom no one respected. Then, when everybody was least expecting it, came the deliverance of France as if by a wondrous miracle.



## 44. The Wonderful Story of Joan of Arc

Henry VI. of England, 1422-1461.

Joan of Arc (France), 1412-1431.

### § 1

JOAN of Arc was the daughter of a farmer, and was born in the village of Domrémy, in Lorraine (1412). As a child she was unusually gentle and thoughtful, delighting in the services of the Church, given to wandering by herself in the pinewoods and listening to the song of the birds. Much of her spare time she spent in helping her sick neighbours, for she had a loving, pitying heart. In some ways, however, she was more like a boy, for she wanted to dress up as a soldier and join the French army.

Joan and her family were only too familiar with the sight of soldiers, both their own and the English. More than once in her childhood they had to flee for their lives to the woods, returning a few days later, when the storm of war had passed, to find their home a burnt and blackened ruin. Her heart was filled with pity for her country.

When she was thirteen, Joan began to see visions of the archangel Michael, and of St. Margaret and St. Catherine, whose "voices" talked with her, and told her the will of God. They told her that she had been chosen by God to save her country.

For long she resisted, doubting. But in the end this simple country girl rode into the camp of the Orleanist army at Vaucouleurs, the nearest town to

Domrémy, and asked to see the captain, Baudricourt. She told him that she had been sent by the King of Kings to rescue France, and to have the Dauphin crowned and anointed with the holy oil in Rheims Cathedral, like all his ancestors. The rough soldiers burst into a shout of laughter.

But in the end she persuaded Baudricourt, and he gave her a suit of armour and a white horse, and one of his captains to ride with her as escort to the court of the Dauphin.

Joan went straight on, clad in her armour, among the gay courtiers who mocked her, and she spoke her message to the Dauphin. It was hard work to put any spirit and faith into such a man of straw. However, he was persuaded to place her in command of his despondent army.

Joan soon gained a wonderful influence over the soldiers. Her peasant humour, her sound common sense, and real goodness of heart were united to a deep faith in her own mission. Soon the soldiers worshipped her as a heaven-sent deliverer. Under her kind but strict rule they gave up their swearing, their hard drinking, and evil living, and followed her with enthusiasm.

Her first battle, though small, was a victory, and this gave courage to the French. For many years the French had grown accustomed to the idea that they could not beat the English, even if they greatly outnumbered them.





LADIES OF THE DAUPHIN'S COURT,  
*(From a Froissart MS. in the British Museum.)*

## § 2

The English were now besieging the great fortress of Orleans (1428). Joan was only sixteen, but she rode with her army to its rescue, and a fierce fight ensued. She was able "to stay from dawn to night-fall on horseback without meat or drink."

Clad in bright armour, mounted on a white charger, and carrying a white banner embroidered with the purple lilies of France, she was in the thick of the battle, shouting encouragement to her soldiers. Even when wounded she refused to retire.

She was successful, and the English were obliged to withdraw from Orleans. Joan then persuaded the weak Dauphin to come to Rheims Cathedral, and there he was crowned as Charles VII. amid the cheers of the people, while Joan knelt giving all thanks to God for her victory. Then she asked Charles to let her go home to her parents, since her work was done.

But the end of Joan's story is a tragedy. The king would not spare her now, and she continued to lead his army. But many of his old generals and most of his vicious courtiers were bitterly jealous of "the Maid." They were not sorry when, in a battle soon after this, she was taken prisoner by the Burgundians, who did not know what to do with her. They knew that the common people of France worshipped her as a saint, but her enemies tried to make out that her wonderful successes were due to witchcraft. They sold her—their noblest patriot—to the English. The English, perhaps equally at a loss, handed her over to a Church court, presided over by the Bishop of





Joan's triumphal entry into Orleans.

*(After Scherrer.)*

Beauvais, to be tried on a charge of heresy and witchcraft. The Dauphin and his party raised not a finger to save her.

Joan was imprisoned for a year, and her trial lasted

many weeks. The Bishop, who presided, tried sincerely to be fair to her : no one could prove any crime against her. But in those days, powers beyond the ordinary were set down as due to "black magic." For Joan to go on saying that "her voices were of God," even when the Church said they were not, was "heresy"—the worst crime in the eyes of the Church. So the Church court named her a heretic and handed her back to the English. Then she was burned alive in the market-place at Rouen.

Even amid the flames she cried : "Yes, my voices were of God !" And an English soldier standing by turned sick with fear and shame. "We are lost !" he exclaimed ; "we have burned a saint."

From that day the English cause in France was indeed lost. A great wave of patriotism and courage swept through the French people, and they rallied round King Charles. The Duke of Burgundy became unpopular, and soon quarrelled with the English. Bedford had a hard task, and many difficulties in England as well.

The French offered to make peace (1435) by yielding Normandy and Guienne to the English if they would resign their claim to the French crown. The English obstinately refused, and went on losing battle after battle—until they had nothing left but Calais (1453).

When the Duke of Suffolk was sent over to arrange a peace, the English were still hoping for victory, and regarded this peace as a disgrace. Poor Suffolk was captured in the Channel, dragged on to a fishing-boat, and beheaded with a rusty axe by his enemies.

So ended the Hundred Years' War. France had become a new nation. The English at last held in



France nothing but Calais, which also was lost about a hundred years later.

### 45. The Wars of the Roses

*House of Lancaster:* Henry VI., 1422-1461. *House of York:* Edward IV., 1461-1483; Edward V., 1483; and Richard III., 1483-1485.

IN the middle of the fifteenth century all the woes of France seemed to have descended on England. A civil war broke out, called the "Wars of the Roses," which lasted thirty years (1455-1485).

The English barons came back from the French wars with a large following of their vassals, or with hired soldiers who were now becoming a common feature of Europe. These hired soldiers were a nuisance in time of peace. They had nothing to do but play, drink, quarrel, and fight. They lived well at the expense of the baron who kept or "maintained" them, they wore his badge and livery, and they were known as his "retainers."

Foremost among the haughty nobles who prided themselves on the number of their retainers was the great Earl of Warwick. He held lands and castles in the Midlands, in Wales, in the Severn valley, and many in southern England. "His fortresses were more numerous than those of any other noble, and his retainers beyond counting. When he travelled, his escort was often some five hundred armed men, all wearing red coats with the earl's famous silver badge of a bear with a ragged staff. It was said that when he came to London he had so large a household that six oxen were eaten at a breakfast. Every tavern was full

of his meat, for any man that had any friend in the earl's house could have as much stewed and roast meat as he might carry upon a long dagger."

The king, Henry VI. (1422-1461), who had succeeded to the throne as a baby during the French war, became a pious, kindly, and learned man. But he was quite



The Duke of Gloucester and the Earl of Warwick in battle.

*(From a late 15th-century MS.)*

unable to keep his barons in order. He had married a much more warlike person than himself, the fierce Princess Margaret of Anjou. But many Englishmen hated her because she was French and had overbearing manners. When the king was thirty-two years old, he had an attack of insanity; and the question arose, who was to be regent?

Warwick, really the most powerful man in England,



set up his friend, Richard, Duke of York, as regent. Now this Duke of York was descended from the boy Mortimer,\* who should have become king when Richard II. was deposed in favour of that Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster, who became Henry IV. Richard, Duke of York, was popular, and a stronger ruler than the king, and he was now heir to the throne if the king died without children.

But just then a baby son was born to Henry VI. Then Warwick stirred up York to claim the throne for himself. Soon war broke out between the Lancastrians—followers of the Lancastrian king, Henry VI.—and the Yorkists, followers of Richard, Duke of York, who was supported at first by Warwick. This civil war is often called the “Wars of the Roses,” because the Yorkists took a white rose, and the Lancastrians a red rose, as their badge.

The nobles and their retainers threw themselves eagerly into the struggle, and many battles were fought in different parts of England. On the whole, the towns supported the Yorkists, while the Lancastrians drew their chief strength from the country districts of the north and west of England. It was a dreary war, for everybody was fighting for his own ends, and men changed sides shamelessly when it suited them.

The great Warwick was called “the King-maker,” because he was so powerful that he was able to place at least two kings upon the throne.

When Richard of York was killed in battle, Warwick made Edward, Richard's son, king as Edward IV., the first king of the House of York (1461–1483). After a few years Edward got tired of being ordered about by

\* See Chapter 41, p. 202.

Warwick, and he married secretly and against Warwick's wishes (1470). Warwick in a rage then went over to the side of Queen Margaret, dragged Henry VI. (sane



Gentlemen's costume, time of Edward IV.

(1 *Cott. MS.*, Nero, D ix. 2, 3, and 4; *Roy. MSS.*, 15 E iv. and 15 E ii.)

for the time being) out of prison, and set him on the throne again. But Henry VI. died the next year (1471).

Then Edward IV., with help from the Hanse merchants overseas, came back to England, defeated and killed Warwick in battle, and ruled till his death (1483).



Unluckily Edward IV. left only a boy, Edward V., to succeed him, and the old struggle began again. The young king's clever uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, made himself regent, killed or imprisoned all his enemies, and frightened Parliament into declaring him king before the end of the year—Richard III. (1483-1485). The young rightful king and his brother were murdered in the Tower of London soon after. But Richard went too far in his wickedness, and the men of England looked round for some one to deliver them from the last of the Yorkists.

Then out of Wales came a man, named Henry Tudor, who was a distant connection of the House of Lancaster. He marched from Milford Haven (August 7, 1485) into England, and men of all parties flocked to his standard.

Richard III. met him in battle at Bosworth (1485), in Leicestershire. His own army seemed to be mysteriously melting away, and he felt treachery all round him. In the battle itself the Earl of Stanley deserted him and joined Henry. The result was not long in doubt. Richard III. was killed, fighting furiously to the last, and Stanley picked up the crown and placed it on Henry's head. Then Henry marched to London, where Parliament proclaimed him king as Henry VII., the first king of the new and strong line of Tudor sovereigns.

The Wars of the Roses were at last at an end, and a strong king was once again to rule the land and give it peace.

**46. Letters from Fifteenth-century England**

ALL men rejoiced when the civil war (Wars of the Roses) was over, for indeed it was an unhappy, lawless time, though much less so than in the days of King Stephen.

There are still remaining the letters which passed during these years between John Paston (1422-1461), a Norfolk country gentleman, and his wife Margaret, and they show us what the war meant for ordinary peace-loving people.

*Margaret Paston to John Paston.*

"To my right worshipful master, John Paston, be this delivered in haste.

"March 12, 1450.

"There be many enemies against Yarmouth and Cromer, and have done much harm, and taken many Englishmen, and put them in great distress, and greatly ransomed them; and the said enemies be so bold that they come up to the land, and play on Caistor Sands, and in other places, as homely as if they were Englishmen. Folks be sore afraid that they will do much harm this summer, unless there be made right great purveyance\* against them. Other tidings know I none at this time. The blissful Trinity have you in his keeping.—Yours,

"M. P."

\* Here means "plans" or "provision." To purvey meant "to provide beforehand," and was often used of the king's right, when travelling, to send messengers ahead of his party to buy up food, etc., at cheap rates for the use of the court.





Matron and servant in the sick-chamber, later 15th century.  
(B.M., *Reyat MS.*, 15 D i.)

Here is another letter she writes to him when he is in London on business :

“ RIGHT WORSHIPFUL HUSBAND,—

“ I recommend me to you, and pray you to get some crossbows and quarrels (bolts), for our houses here be so low that there may no man shoot out with a longbow, though we had never so much need.

“ Partridge (one of Lord Moleyns’s men—an enemy to the Pastons) and his fellowship are sore afraid that ye would enter again upon them, and they have made great ordinance within the house, as it is told me. They have made wickets on every quarter of the house to shoot out at, both with bows and hand guns.

“ I pray you that you will vouchsafe to buy for me one pound of almonds and one pound of sugar, and that you will buy some frieze to make of your child his gowns ; ye shall have best cheap and best choice of Hayes’ wife, as it is told me. And that ye would buy a yard of broadcloth of black for an hood for me of 13*d.* or 3*sh.* a yard, for there is neither good cloth nor good frieze in this town. As for the child his gowns, an (if) I have them, I will do them maken. The Trinity have you in his keeping, and send you good speed in all your matters.”

Then we find John Paston in vain petitioning the king for compensation against his enemy :

“ To the King our Sovereign Lord, and to the right wise and discreet lords, assembled in this present Parliament.



“ Beseecheth meekly your humble liegeman, John Paston, that . . . Robert Hungerford, Knight, the Lord Moleyns, entered into the said manor (of Gresham), and sent to the mansion a riotous people, to the number of a thousand persons . . . arrayed in manner of war, with bows, arrows . . . pans with fire burning therein, long cromes (hooks) to draw down houses, ladders, pikes, with which they ruined down the walls, and long trees with which they broke up gates and doors, and so came into the said mansion, the wife of your beseecher being at that time within, and forty-one persons with her.



Gentleman, time  
of Henry VII.  
(From the "*Romance  
of the Rose*.")

“ The which persons they drove out of the said mansion, and ruined down the wall of the chamber wherein the wife of your beseecher was, and bare her out of the gates, and cut asunder the posts of the house, and let them fall, and broke up all the coffers within the said mansion . . . and bare away all the stuff, and money. . . .”

These famous *Paston Letters*, written in the English of the fifteenth century, thus show how the troubles of the time affected people living in Norfolk—where no battles were fought ; how neighbour fought with neighbour ; and what dangers a brave woman like Margaret Paston had to face alone when her husband was away in London or elsewhere.

### 47. An Old Man's Tale of Old England

LET us picture to ourselves an old man of eighty-five standing on Bosworth Field after the battle (1485). He would have been born in the year Chaucer died (1400)—the year after Henry Bolingbroke, Henry IV., seized the crown. Imagine him looking back over the changes he had seen in his lifetime, and musing thus :

“ When I was a young man the great barons counted for all, and the peasants for very little. The earls and dukes (like Bolingbroke) could even depose a king and set up one of themselves in his place. Very grand they used to look as they set out, all in bright steel armour from head to foot, horse and man, for the French wars. They looked down on the common archers, though they had to admit they could not have won Crecy and Poitiers without them ! Aye, and Agincourt was an archers' victory too !

“ But now this new gunpowder, with which they shoot iron balls out of cannon, will make a great difference—armour and the walls of towns and of castles will be of little use against it. They say it will soon blow down the thickest castle wall, and what is a baron without his castle ? Only the king can afford to keep cannon.

“ They say, too, that this new king, Harry Tudor, is no fool, and will end, once for all, the barons' armies of retainers. A good thing, too, for honest hard-working folk like us !



“ Dear me ! what a change there is in the farms too. There used to be much corn-growing in our



Carpenter and fisherman, transition period, Henry VI.  
to Edward IV.

(*B.M., Harl. MS. 4,379.*)

village, and every man kept his cows and sheep on the commons. But the lord of the manor, after the Black Death, wanted all his corn strips in one plot. Then he put a fence round that, and round his share of the common land too. A pretty large share he took while

he was about it, and a tidy sheep farm he has made of it.

“He only needs to employ ten labourers to look after the sheep where he needed a hundred before to plough and sow and reap the corn, so the sheep pay him better than the corn. The cloth merchants in the eastern counties, especially around Norwich, are always calling out for more wool ; so my lord can easily sell all he grows.

“How these cloth-makers do get on in the world, to be sure. I recall William de la Pole, whom they call Earl of Suffolk—his grandfather was but a merchant at Hull. Times are changed now that merchants are made earls ! Still, this wool business in villages is good for trade, and it keeps many folks busy—spinning, carding, weaving, dyeing, and pulling. . . .

“There is Jack of Newbury (in Berkshire) who has two hundred people under him in his pay, all working at his looms. ’Tis a common saying now :

‘ I praise God, and ever shall,  
It is the sheep shall pay for all.’

“Many folk are leaving the villages now and going to the towns. Bristol, Hull, and Norwich, and such-like—they’re getting so large that a man can no longer know all his neighbours. My grandson Ned came back to me the other day on a visit from London. He is a fine set up lad, and can even read and write. He was telling me of one William Caxton that has set up what he calls a printing-press in Westminster. ’Tis for making many copies of a book quickly, without the labour of copying them all by hand.”



**48. The "Middle Ages" pass away**

*The Fall of Constantinople, 1453, and the New Learning*

**§ I**

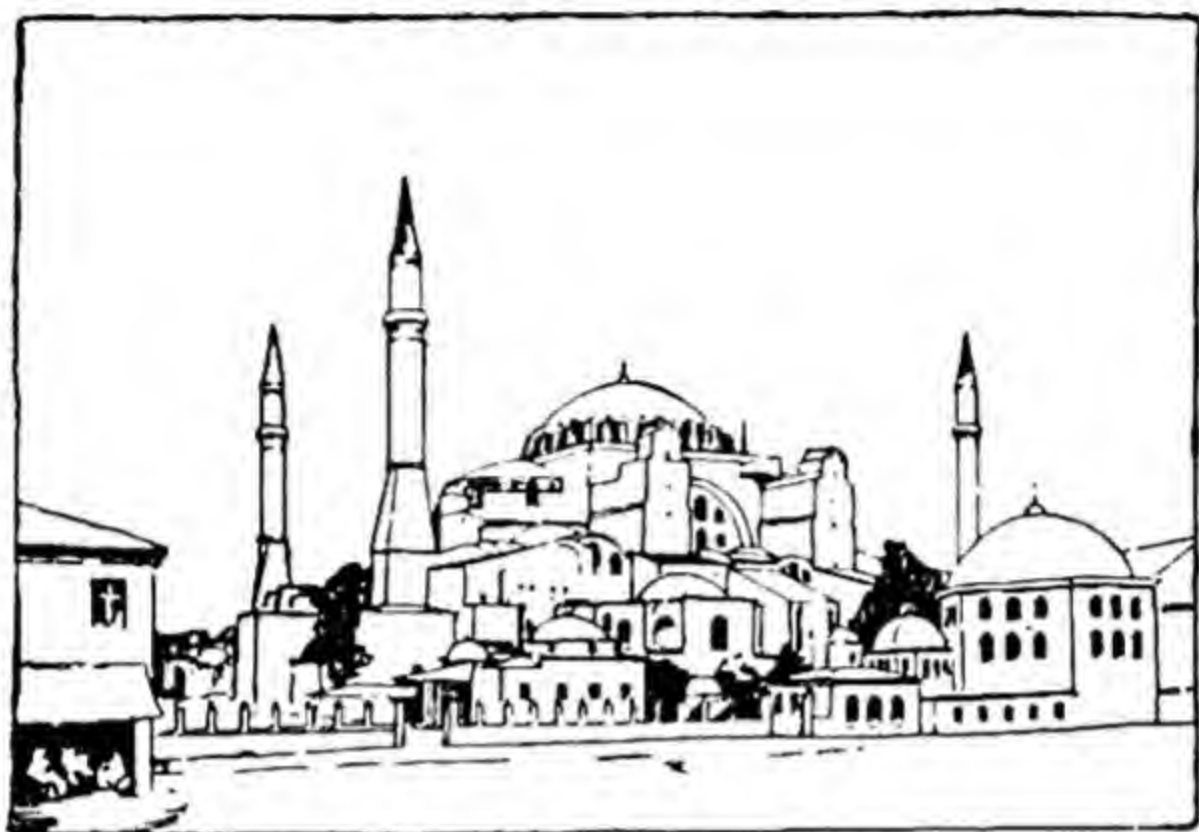
NOT only in England, as the old man saw, but all over Europe, great changes were taking place towards the end of the fifteenth century.

About this time the Turks, pressing on from the Holy Land towards a foothold in Europe, threatened Constantinople itself. This Constantinople was a very old and famous city, named after the Roman Emperor, Constantine, who first went to live there. It was for many centuries the fortress of Europe against Asia. It was still the capital of an empire of its own, and its ruler was styled Emperor—regardless of that ruler in Germany who called himself the Holy Roman Emperor.

Now when the Turks threatened his dominions, the last of these Eastern Emperors begged the Pope to call another Crusade to drive back the infidel. But times had changed. The Popes were busy with other matters. Nor would men have listened to them now, even if they had raised the banner of the Cross.

So in 1453, just as the Wars of the Roses were starting in England, a far greater event took place which affected all the world. Constantinople fell before the thunder and battering of the new guns; and the famous Christian church of St. Sophia became a Mohammedan mosque, as it has been ever since.

The fall of Constantinople (1453) had one unexpected result. Certain Greek scholars in that famous city possessed priceless old manuscripts—copies of the Gospels and of the writings of the saints, and



St. Sophia, Constantinople.

copies of the famous works of the old Greek writers who lived before Christ. Many had left for Italy and France long before the Turkish capture of the city. Now more Greek scholars with their precious manuscripts fled for safety, mostly to Italy.

## § 2

Many of these refugees, both before and after 1453, earned a living in the cities of Italy by giving lessons in Greek and lectures on their manuscripts. The quick-witted Italians had eagerly taken up this New Learning, as it is called, though it was largely a revival of the old learning of the Greeks.



It changed men's ideas in many ways. They found that many of the writings of the old Greeks were far more beautiful than anything they had ever read. And soon they began to find, as Wycliffe had found when he studied the Gospels in Greek, that the lives of some of the Popes and of the clergy did not accord with the Gospel teaching.

The Church, in fact, had been for a long time in a bad way. In the last year of our Edward I.'s reign (1307), a powerful French king, annoyed at the Pope for his interference with his clergy, carried him off to Avignon, in Southern France, and made him live there in a stately palace, but, in fact, a prisoner under his influence. It was not likely that the English king or his subjects would pay much attention to decrees issued by a Pope under French influence. This "Babylonish Captivity" of the Pope, as it is called, lasted for seventy years.

The Pope was at last allowed to return to Rome in 1377, the year when Wycliffe was tried for heresy by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In Rome there was a rival Pope. So there were now two Popes, and this period is called the "Great Schism," because it divided the Church into two parties. A new Pope was always chosen by the cardinals—the clergy of highest rank in Rome; but they could not always agree, and for some years there were always two men claiming to be head of the Church of Christ on earth.

It was wonderful how much the New Learning interested not only the rich and learned, but also other men. Fortunately, just when more people wanted to read more, came the great invention of Printing.

### 49. A New Age : Caxton and Printing

COPIES of books were still very scarce and dear. Not only the monks, but other people—who were getting better educated through the spread of “grammar schools” in the towns—sometimes copied books for themselves or their friends. Still there were not nearly enough copies till William Caxton started a new way of making books.

Caxton was an English cloth merchant. From being an apprentice in London, he rose to be head of the House of the Merchant Adventurers at Bruges, in Flanders. The Merchant Adventurers were a company of English merchants trading with Holland, Belgium, Germany, and Scandinavia. Henry IV. had granted them a charter (1406). They had “houses” in foreign towns, such as Bruges and Antwerp, just as the Hanse Merchants had a house in London. Thus English merchants were now themselves “adventuring” and trading overseas, and no longer left overseas trade entirely to foreign merchants and ships.

In Bruges, Caxton was so important a person that Edward IV. found him useful when he wanted to make a treaty with the Duke of Burgundy. So Caxton came to know Margaret, Edward IV.’s sister, who had married the Duke of Burgundy. Both of them were great book-lovers.

One day Caxton mentioned that he had started translating a collection of old French stories of the Trojan War.



"Finish it for me and give me a copy," said the duchess. So Caxton did so, and Margaret was so delighted with the book that many of her friends were soon begging Caxton to make copies for them also. Caxton wrote and wrote till, as he says, "his pen was



Costume, time of Edward IV.

(*B.M., Royal MSS. (1), 15 D i.; (2), 14 E iv.*)

worn, his hand weary and not steadfast, and his eyes dimmed with overmuch looking on the white paper."

Then he heard of a man in Bruges who had copied an invention of a German named Gutenberg, by which many copies of one book could be "printed" easily and quickly. Caxton went to learn how it was done. He had retired from business now, and entered the service of Duchess Margaret. Then he set up a

“printing-press” of his own in Bruges. Later on he settled in England, bringing with him the first printing-press ever seen in England.

Whan I remembre that euerp man is bounden  
 by the comendement & counceyll of the wyse  
 man to eschewe slooth and idleness wher  
 he is moost and nouerlesse of vices and  
 ought to put my self vnto vertuous ocupacion and be-  
 spensse / Than I hauege no grette charge of ocupacion  
 folowynge the sayd counceyll / toke a frenche booke  
 and redde thern many strange and meruailous histo-  
 ryas wher in I had grette pleasur and delite / as well  
 for the nouelte of the same as for the fayne langage of  
 frenshe . whiche was in prose so well and conueni-  
 diously sette and wryton / whiche me thought I vnder-  
 stood the sentence and substance of euerp mater / And  
 for so moche as this booke was newe and late maad  
 and drawen in to frenshe / and neuer had seen hit in oure  
 englyssh tonge : I thought in my self hit shold be a good  
 besynes to translate hit in to oure englyssh / to thende  
 that hit myght be had as well in the royaume of Eng-  
 lond as in other landes / and also for to passe therewith  
 the tyme . and thus conclude my self to begynne this  
 sayd worke . And forthwith toke penne and pike and  
 began boldly to renne forth as blinde bayard in this  
 presente worke whiche is named the recuyell of the  
 troian histories And after ward whan I remembre  
 my self of my simplicity and vnderstanding that I had  
 in bothe langages / that is to wete in frenshe & in englyssh  
 for in france was I neuer / and was born & leuied in  
 englyssh in Kent in the weeld wher I doute not is spo-  
 ken as brode and rude englyssh as is in any place of eng-  
 lond & haue contynued by the space of . xxx . yere for the  
 most parte in the contres of Brabant . flandres & holland

A page from Caxton's first book printed in Bruges,  
*The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy.*

(British Museum.)

Caxton settled with his wife and daughter and with the precious printing-press in a little house in Westminster. Like all shopkeepers in those days when



few could read, he hung out a sign—a shield, called the Red Pale, with a broad red band down the middle—to mark the site of his workshop. For those who could read, he sent out a printed notice :

“ If it please any man, cleric or lay, to buy any copies of the Salisbury Prayer Book, printed after the form of this present letter, which be well and truly correct, let him come to Westminster at the Red Pale, and he shall have them good cheap.”

It was hard work, for Caxton not only set up the type, printed his books, bound them, and sold them, but he also translated and even wrote many books himself. Many famous people visited him at work—Edward IV. and Richard III. and others. Caxton died in 1491, in the reign of the first Tudor king.

Others carried on his work, and soon many printing-presses were set up in England. Caxton tried to think of books that most people would like to read, so that he could sell a good many copies. The best-known books he printed were *The Golden Legend*, *Malory's Tales of King Arthur*, *The Romance of the Rose*, and the *Rules of the Game of Chess*.

A new age had begun.

## 50. New Worlds : Prince Henry the Navigator and Columbus

ANOTHER man famous like Caxton in the fifteenth century was Prince Henry the Navigator. He was the youngest son of the King of Portugal, and cousin of our King Henry V. He was learned, courteous, and brave, a young man so outstanding that

he received knighthood before his elder brothers. He might have led a gay and brilliant life at court. But his mind was set on another object. He built himself a house on a lonely desolate part of the sandy coast of Portugal; and there, looking out every day across the stormy Atlantic, he worked, sometimes by himself, sometimes consulting with the learned men of his day, setting himself to discover the truth about the world in which we live.

The maps of those days were few, and full of guess-work. Many men in Europe still believed that the earth was flat like a plate, and that a great sea ran all round the edge. They knew nothing of Africa except the north coast, which looked on to the Mediterranean Sea, and had once been a part of the ancient Roman Empire. They believed that there were vast lands "behind" Africa inhabited by monsters—"the cannibals, that each other eat, and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders. . . ."

The men of Europe had never sailed much beyond

\* Shakespeare, *Othello*.



Africa—From Ceuta to Madeira, the Canaries, and Cape Bojador.

(From Fra Mauro's map, 1457, showing the countries upside down like many maps of that time.)



their coasts—except south along the African coast, or north towards Russia. They had for many hundreds of years traded busily along the land routes with ancient Syria, Arabia, Persia, and India. The question now was how to get to India without passing overland through the countries held by the savage Turks.

Many men were thinking out this problem. Prince Henry thought there must be a way round the south of Africa, and determined that his men should find it. He spent much time and money in procuring better maps and mariner's compasses, which the sailors of Europe were now beginning to use.



Negro boys.

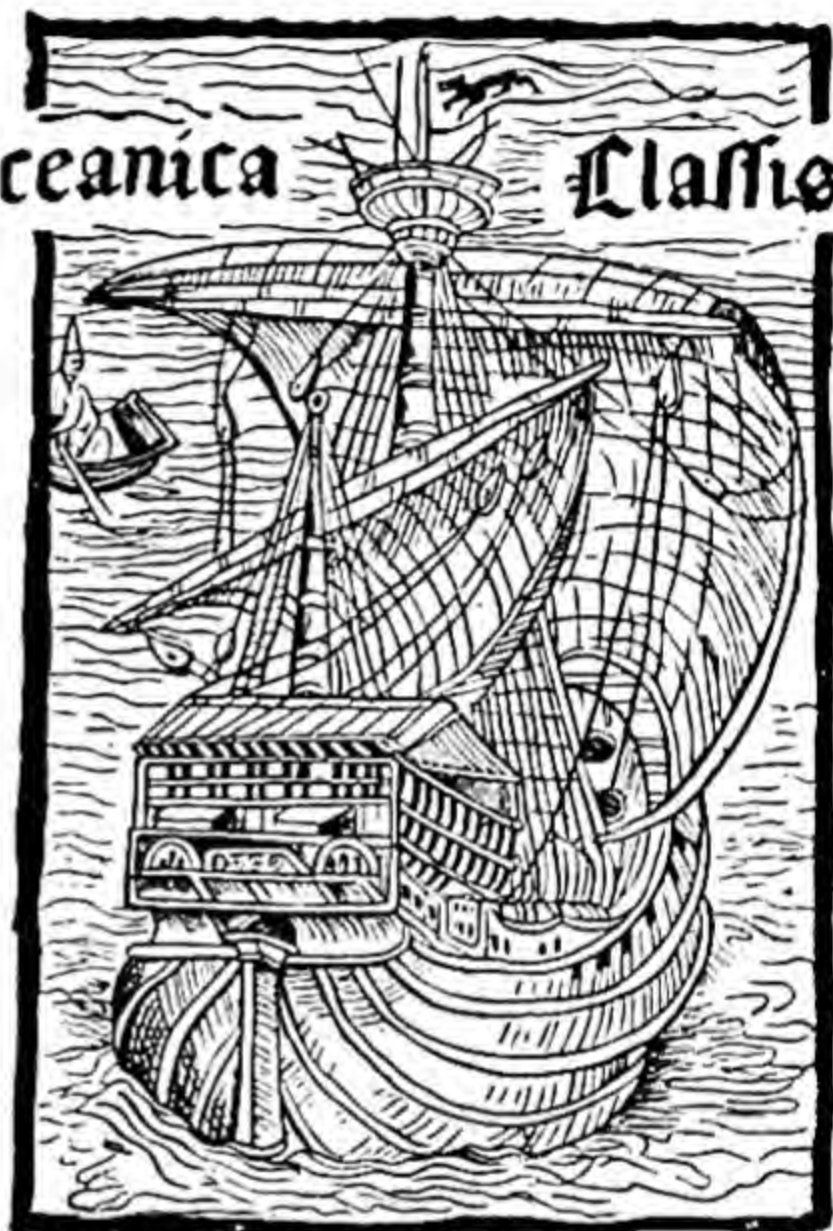
(From Cabot's map, 1544.)

Portuguese sailors discovered the Azores and Madeira Islands, which still belong to Portugal. They landed at what is now Cape Bojador, on the coast of Africa. They brought back some black men, and specimens of gold dust and ivory to show to their prince. They told wonderful tales, too, of sea-serpents and all kinds of monsters they had met, of "boiling seas" and liquid flame.

Other expeditions went out, meeting many difficulties, but each one feeling its way a little farther south round the coast of this great unknown continent. Once they landed and were received by the negro king of the Congo, who sat on an ivory platform and wore copper bracelets and a cap made of palm leaves adorned with a horse's tail.

The year 1486 was a great year, for a Portuguese sailor, Bartholomew Diaz, rounded the "Cape of Storms" amid terrible weather, though on the return journey the sun smiled on him. He felt greatly cheered at having passed the greatest obstacle, and his king insisted that now its name must indeed be the Cape of Good Hope, which it is still called.

Oceanica Classis



A ship of the time of Columbus,  
the *Santa Maria*.

(From a woodcut of 1493.)

The rounding of the Cape of Good Hope was a great feat. Sailors had indeed at this time the compass to guide them, but they had to take food to last for a very long time, and they knew nothing about tinning or freezing foods to preserve them. And it was very risky to trust to getting fresh food and drinking water from the lands they passed, when they believed these to be inhabited by cannibals or giants. There were storms to be faced, and terrible heat when they passed through the tropics. It was not easy to persuade either officers or sailors to go on such expeditions.

Often the only seamen Prince Henry could get were criminals let out of prison for this purpose. But he persisted in his work and would never admit defeat. He encouraged the despondent sailors, he studied winds



and tides and stars ; he went on working out maps and spending money on fresh ships.

Prince Henry himself died before Africa was rounded. Later, a Portuguese sailor, Vasco da Gama, at last reached India (May 20, 1498) by way of the Cape of Good Hope, and returned in triumph to Portugal. A new day had dawned for the men of Europe.

A few years earlier, another of the world's great men was trying to reach India by sailing westward, for he was convinced that the world was round. His name was Christopher Columbus. On his way he discovered not India, but outlying parts of an immense new continent, later called America (1492).

To this New World our own English sailors, traders, and pilgrims were soon to set forth and make a "New England" across the ocean. But that great story must be told in our next volume.

# HISTORY WRITTEN IN STONE

## 51. The Buildings of the Middle Ages

### § I

ALL through the ages history has been "written in stone," and men began to use stone and to build long before they could write. The unlettered peasants of the Middle Ages learned many a silent lesson from the beauty and reverence expressed in their wonderful old churches, their pictures and ornaments and images in stone. And so, much history can be learnt by studying old buildings ; it is also far more interesting to go into an ancient church or castle when we know something of the history of its times, and can picture to ourselves how people worked and played, fought or worshipped, in these surroundings.

The crowning glory of mediæval\* building is in its churches. Churches were built from very early times in every village and town, and as a part of every monastery. And though there were also many castles scattered about the country, these have more often been destroyed or altered to suit some later owner's comfort. So the churches are the chief monuments that remain of the Middle Ages.

The church was the centre of the village life.

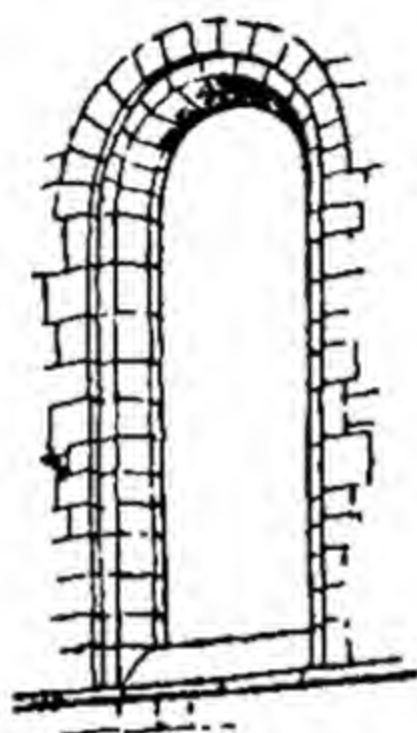
\* *Mediæval*, i.e. belonging to the *Middle Ages*.



Though there were often many churches in a town, there was, as a rule, only one church in a village, and every one belonged to it, had a share in it, and felt a pride in it. Everybody attended divine service in it on Sundays, and there were many weekday services as well. It was also their meeting-place, in which they held such meetings as they had, and even their place of



Saxon Tower of  
Sompting Church,  
Sussex.



Norman window.



Norman doorway.

refuge—from enemies, floods, plague, and fire. It was at first the only stone building in the village besides the manor-house.

Very few Saxon buildings remain to-day. But there are many Norman buildings, and these are solid and bold, well-proportioned and beautiful. Many of our churches were begun in Norman times, and added to in later periods. The Normans had a natural genius for building. Their clergy were shocked at the decay of religion and the slackness of the priests among the Saxons ; and we find a large number of churches and monasteries built all over England in the days of the Conqueror and his successors. Often, too, a Norman baron would show his repentance for his deeds

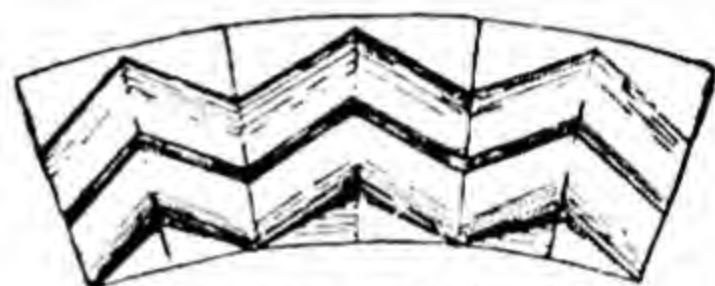
of violence by giving money to build a church or monastery.

We can always tell a church (or part of one) built in the *Norman style* (about 1050 to 1150) by its massive pillars, round arches, round-headed windows, and rounded roof or "barrel" vaulting. The Normans were fond of bold, simple ornaments, chiefly "zig-zag," but sometimes resembling a rope or a cable, as on the roof of the chancel of St. Peter in the East, Oxford.

The Norman style was followed by what we call



Cable moulding.



Chevron, or zig-zag  
moulding.

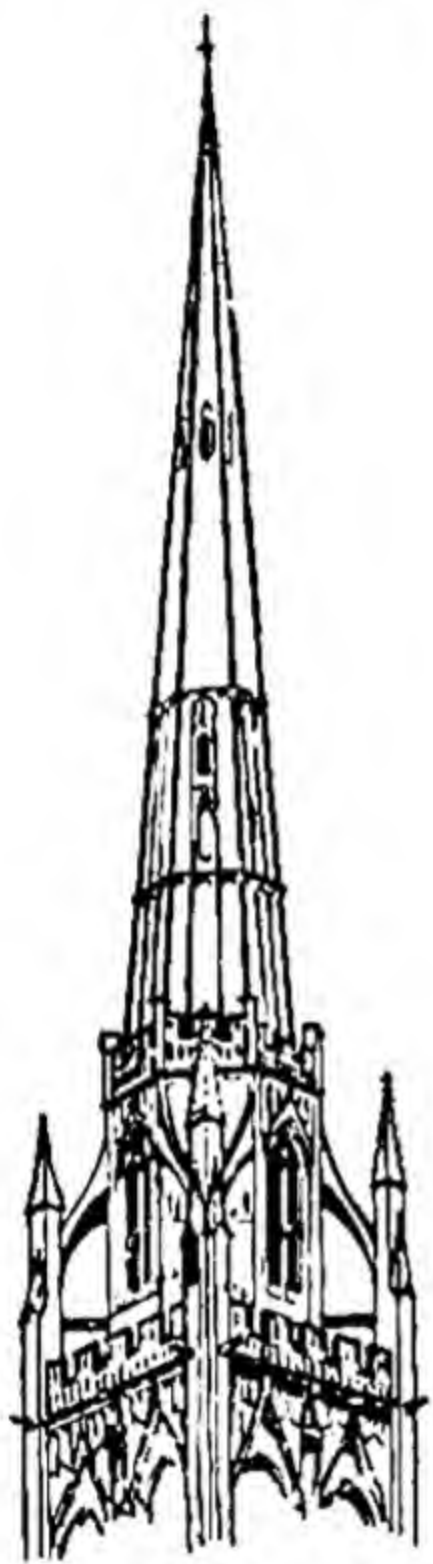
the *Early English style* (about 1150–1300; see Plate facing page 241). This is lighter and more graceful. The builders had discovered how to construct a building with a loftier and more varied roof. So we get the pointed arches and groined roofs, introducing the style known as Gothic. The windows are narrow, with a pointed arch above. Often three or more narrow windows are set side by side, as in the famous "Five Sisters" window in York Minster. These are called "lancet windows." As time went on, three or more narrow windows were joined into one, and crowned at the top with beautiful flowing tracery like lace in stone.

The ornaments in this style are supplied by copies from natural leaves or foliage.

Later, Early English style merged into the *Decorated*



*style* (about 1250-1400). In this style there is more decoration: the pillars are often built in clusters, and the whole building is cunningly arranged to give beautiful effects of light and shade. The decoration,



Gothic steeple.

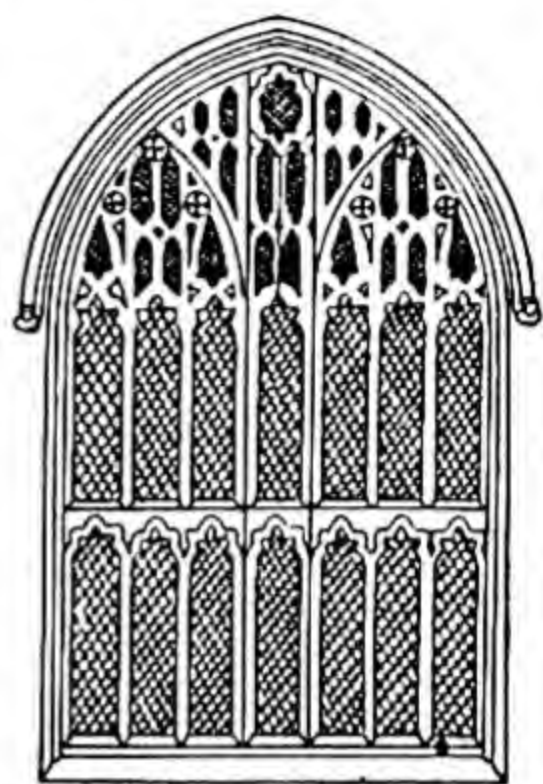


Decorated window.

Decorated  
pinnacle.Decorated  
capital.

both within and without, is elaborate and often beautiful. It tends, however, as time goes on, to become rather overloaded and artificial, like the fantastic dresses of the period. More use is made of flowers and leaves, but the ornament is less natural and more stiff. The use of the "ball-flower" ornament is specially marked at this period.

The fifteenth century (1400–1500), roughly speaking, is known as the period of *Perpendicular* architecture. Now the pillars are carried very high up, and instead of pointed arches to finish them, we get wide flat roofs covered with the delicate and graceful work known as fan-vaulting. Windows are wider and higher, divided by many mullions, that is, vertical bars of stone, and so there is more light in the churches. The whole effect of the buildings, inside and out, is of many vertical lines, perpendicular to the ground, shooting upwards to immense heights.



Perpendicular window.

One of the most beautiful examples is King's College Chapel at Cambridge, built by the ill-fated Henry VI. A poet thus describes it :

“ Tax not the royal saint with vain expense,  
With ill-matched aims the architect who planned—  
Albeit labouring for a scanty band  
Of white-robed scholars only—this immense  
And glorious work of fine intelligence !  
Give all thou canst ; high Heaven rejects the lore  
Of nicely-calculated less or more ;  
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense  
*These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof*  
*Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,*  
*Where light and shade repose, where music dwells*  
Lingering. . . .  
They dreamt not of a perishable home  
Who thus could build. . . .” \*

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\* Wordsworth : *Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge.*  
(8,410)



Another very beautiful and early example of Perpendicular work is to be found in Gloucester Cathedral and cloisters. Curiously enough, this example is also due indirectly to one of our unhappy kings—in this case, Edward II. When he was murdered in Berkeley Castle, near Gloucester (1327), the Abbot of Gloucester boldly begged leave to have his body suitably buried, so the murdered king was given a royal funeral, and he was buried under one of the most beautiful monuments in the country which may still be seen. In spite of his misdeeds, many people began to feel sorry for Edward II. after his cruel death, and even to speak of him as a martyr and visit his tomb. Soon pilgrims were thronging to Gloucester, and so many and rich were the offerings they left there, that the abbot was able to carry out vast changes in his buildings and make Gloucester Cathedral one of the finest in the country.

## § 2

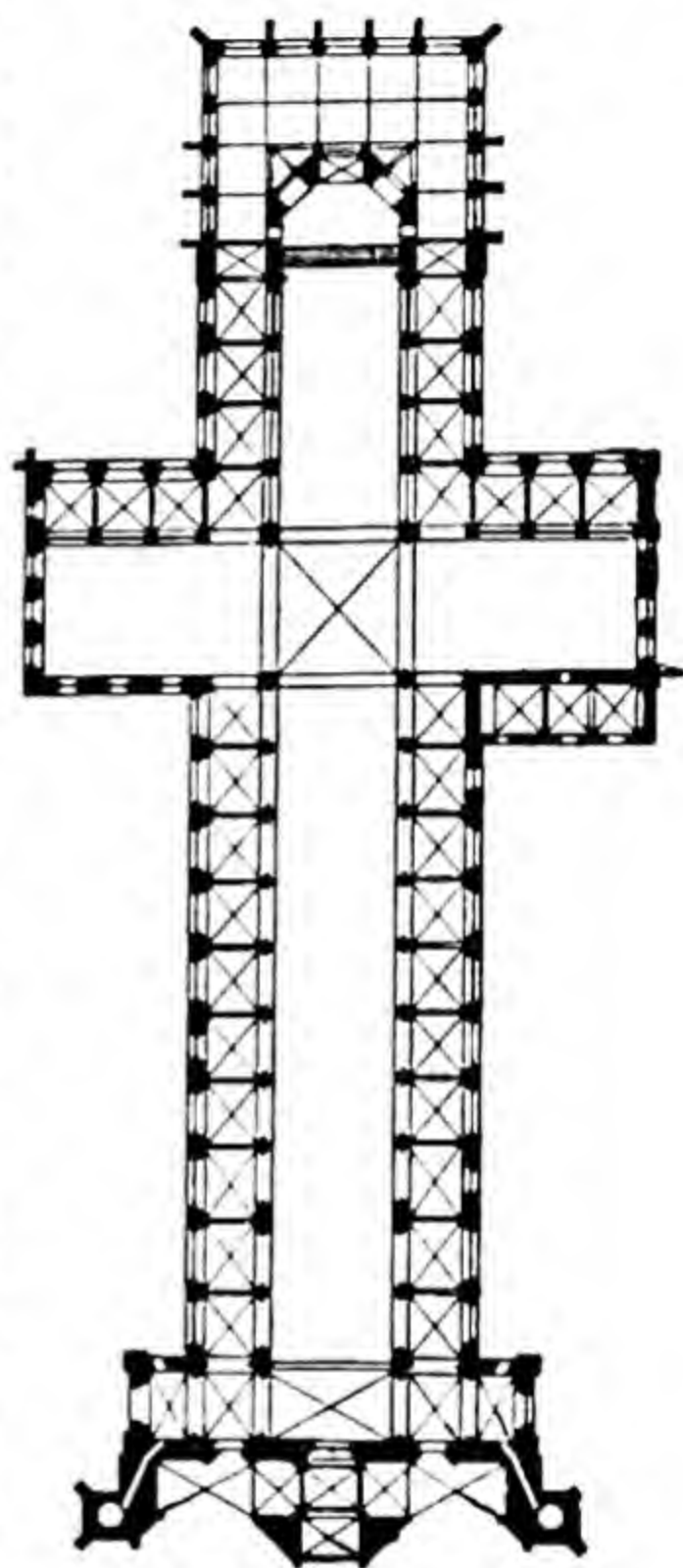
Some points about mediæval churches, in contrast with our own, remind us of the daily life of the people of those times. The churches for long were only dimly lit, by windows often small in proportion to the size of the building and filled in with rich but finely stained glass. The people had no service-books ; they would not have been able to read them, even had they been written in English. But all the services were said or sung in Latin ; they were short, and the priest knew them by heart.

To-day the beautiful stained glass which is left in some very early windows is one of our most precious

treasures. Modern craftsmen in glass have never discovered how to get quite the rich, pure colouring achieved by the craftsmen of the Middle Ages, though, of course, the modern drawing is more natural than the comically stiff figures in some of the very early windows (*e.g.* some in Christ Church, Oxford).

In monastic churches the monks were often the chief part of the congregation, and all sat in the chancel, and this is why, in old churches, the chancel is often the chief part of the church. The services were short, and there were no seats for the ordinary congregation.

But in a monastic church the monks, who had to attend many services during the twenty-four hours, were allowed to sit down at certain times. So there were finely carved oak choir-stalls, *i.e.* seats in the chancel (for example, in Chester Cathedral). Generally these seats could be tilted up while the monks were standing; and underneath the seat was a sort of little ledge, put there out of pity for old or infirm monks to lean against while standing through the long singing of the Psalms. These are called *misericordia* seats (after the Latin word for



Plan of Peterborough Cathedral.



“pity”). They are often grotesquely carved, every seat with a different bird, animal, or picture of devil or saint.

The workers of old days—builders and joiners and carvers—were allowed much more liberty in their work than our modern workmen; and so they could, and did, indulge their fancy by all sorts of quaint little bits of work of this kind. Generally the carving, even in the darkest and most distant corner of the roof, was as faithfully and exactly done as that which would be seen by everybody.

Old churches often have many altars besides the main or “high altar.” This was partly because so many churches were served by monks, and every monk in priest’s orders was bound to say Mass (the Communion service) at the altar once a day. Also, rich men often left money in their wills to pay for Masses to be said or sung every day in “chantry” chapels for the repose of their souls.

Chaucer says of his “Poor Parson of a town”:

“He left not his sheep encumbred in the mire  
And ran to London, unto Sainte Paul’s  
To seek him a chantry for souls. . . .”

All altars, especially the high altar, were of course treated with great reverence: the high altar was usually screened off from the nave by a beautiful rood-screen, carved in wood or stone and surmounted by a rood or crucifix.

The bells were a very important part of church furniture in days when services were frequent and most people had no clocks. The church bell also summoned people to meetings, and gave warning of fires, or of the

approach of an enemy. So there was generally a tower at the west end in which the bells were hung, and where the people could crowd for safety.

Fires were frequent, and often did great damage. Therefore, the wooden roofs had to be supported underneath with masonry, and how to do this skilfully, beautifully, and safely was the great problem of builders in the early Middle Ages.

Outside, the roofs were very steeply pitched at first, to allow the rain to run off. Later, builders discovered how to make gutter spouts or gargoyles projecting out from the corners to drain off the water. The stone carvers enjoyed themselves by covering these with weirdly grotesque images, which are supposed to represent devils driven out of church.

The people of those days had a vivid belief in angels, saints, and evil spirits, and their power to help and hinder human beings. So there were many images of saints and martyrs, in stone or wood, in the churches. Above one of the pillars in Chester Cathedral there is a queer little man's head, put there to frighten away the devil, who, it was said, had been teasing and tempting the monks in the choir-stalls! There were also many wall-paintings known as frescoes. Part of one of these paintings is shown on page 246.

## 52. The Homes of the People

ARCHITECTURE as an art has unfortunately never yet concerned itself seriously with the homes of ordinary British people. Modern workmen's houses are often ugly enough, just aiming at usefulness and cheapness.





Part of fresco—"The Doom," "St. Lawrence," Broughton.

(Drawn by John Deighton. Age 13 years.)

The "Judge of All Men" is shown only by a foot and part of a robe. The figure with a sword is that of an angel marshalling souls for judgment. Certain angels are looking out from the towers of Heaven. The Virgin Mary is sheltering timid souls beneath her ample robe.

But they are more healthy if less picturesque than the mud or wooden huts, thatched with straw, in which most people in this country had to live during the Middle Ages. These would generally consist only of one living-room, with possibly a loft in the roof used as a bedroom.

If the poor man's house was a hovel, the rich man's was a fortress for many years after the Norman Conquest. It was not so much a thing of beauty and comfort, as a strong refuge from which a man could defy his neighbours, or even the king himself. William I. built many strong castles to keep the English people in order; and his Norman barons copied his example for their own benefit so far as he would let them. Under a weak king like Stephen, castles grew up like mushrooms.

A castle had to be capable of housing a great many soldiers and their horses. So it was generally built round a courtyard. In the main tower lived the lord and his family. The other towers housed his soldiers, his household officials, and numerous servants. The whole was surrounded by a deep moat filled with water. This could only be crossed by a drawbridge which was lowered from inside the castle, and, of course, would not be let down when an enemy was approaching.

The castle walls were very thick (ten or fifteen feet), the windows were very narrow on the outside, broadening towards the inside. This was to allow archers from within to shoot at their enemies with very little risk of getting hit in their turn.

The roofs of the towers were always flat, surrounded by battlements. From here the defenders could see a long way over the surrounding country. They could also drop big stones, molten lead, and so on, on the heads



of an enemy who succeeded on getting across the moat. So it is easy to understand why castles were often built on a steep hill or rock. Within the courtyard would be a well to supply drinking-water.

The lord's or baron's family lived, ate, worked, and played in the one big hall, generally on the first floor of the main tower, over the entrance gateway. There was no glass at first. For light at night, smoky torches flamed from niches in the walls. The smoke from the big log fire escaped through a hole in the roof; later, men learnt how to construct a sort of chimney in the wall at the side. These halls must have been very draughty or stuffy at the best of times.

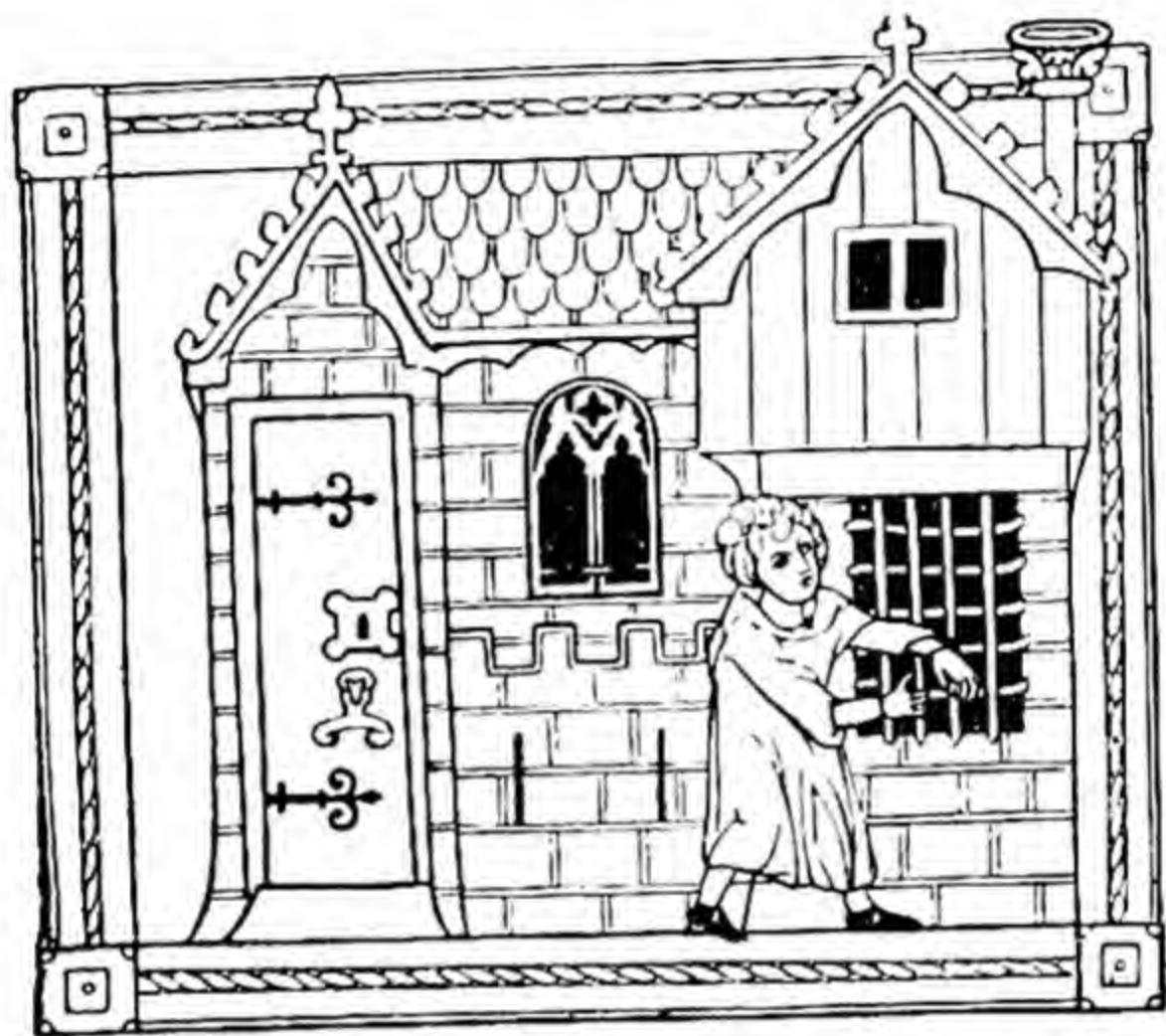
There was no wall-paper, but the walls were sometimes hung with wonderful tapestry, worked by the ladies of the house. There were no carpets; the floor was covered with rushes, on which were thrown rubbish of all sorts, and bones for the dogs to gnaw.

Our idea of a house is a building containing a certain number of sitting-rooms and bedrooms of more or less equal size, and (if possible) one bedroom for each member of the family. The men of the Middle Ages were accustomed to think of a house as consisting mainly of one big room, the hall.\* Separate bed or sitting rooms came as a later luxury.

There are found, even in Norman houses, small bedrooms for the ladies of the family built into the thickness of the walls of the hall. These would often have no separate windows; they would be little more than large cupboards or recesses, shut off from the hall at night by a heavy leathern curtain.

\* Therefore *Hall* is still sometimes used as the name of the biggest house in a village (e.g. Hartford Hall, Cheshire).

In the thirteenth century the builders began to enlarge these little rooms, to give them separate windows, and perhaps add one or two guest chambers at the dais end of the hall. By this time, too, the lord and lady usually had a solar, or withdrawing-room, opening off their end of the hall, where they and their



A manuscript representation of a mediæval house.

*(From a 14th-century Romance.)*

children might withdraw in the evenings, or receive guests in greater privacy. To-day we call the solar the "drawing-room."

At the lower end of the hall there was often a minstrels' gallery, in which wandering minstrels would perform. They would be rewarded with money, a good supper, and a night's lodging. No doubt there was plenty of rather boisterous fun in a cheerful noisy sort of way in the old halls.



In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as the barons ceased to look upon private warfare as their chief amusement, and thought more about home comforts, their homes began to change.



Mummers at a feast.

Private rooms opening off the hall began to be built; and fireplaces in the hall, occasionally with chimneys; and larger windows, more often with glass, which began to come into use in England about 1200. Glass was very expensive at first, and a nobleman would perhaps have only one set of windows, which were movable:

when he moved from castle to castle he sometimes took the windows with him.

It was not only the noblemen who now had comfortable houses. The rich wool merchants of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries often spent much money in building themselves houses, which of course were not castles or fortresses, though many men like John Paston of Norfolk had often good reason to wish that their house was more like a castle. Paycocke's house at Coggeshall, Essex, is an example of a wool merchant's fine half-timbered house built hundreds of years ago, and there are others in Gloucestershire and elsewhere.

### 53. Looking Forward—History in Stone

#### § 1

*After the Middle Ages*—in the closing years of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century—came many startling changes in men's knowledge of the geography of the world, of ancient history, and of ancient literature ; and in the rise to power of new classes, the merchants of the towns. These changes were reflected in men's customs and ways of living, in their studies at the universities, and deepest of all, in their religion.

They are shown, very strikingly, in their buildings. Roughly, the sixteenth or Tudor century (1500–1600) is the dividing line. Before the Tudors, our architecture is, as has been seen, Gothic. After then it is classical, in imitation of the ancient buildings of the Greeks ; and because the art and learning of the ancient



Greeks was now studied anew, this period of architecture is known as *Renaissance*.\*

Everything Italian was very fashionable in the years that followed the reign of the first Henry Tudor (Henry VII., 1485-1509). The land of Dante, Giotto, and Fra Angelico† still led the world in Art—in great paintings, buildings, and sculptures. Italian fashions even influenced English dress and speech. It was to Italy, too, that men went for their knowledge of “the classics,” the writings of ancient Greece and Rome.

Therefore, it was no wonder if English architecture, from the sixteenth century, begins to show signs of Italian influence. The Italians naturally copied their style from the ancient buildings they found in Rome; and the old Romans, in their day, had copied much from the Greeks.

The difference between Gothic buildings and Classic or Renaissance buildings is best shown by pictures. The chief feature of ancient Greek buildings had been the column, with its capital, and the “entablature” or the flat slab, plain or ornamented, above the capital.

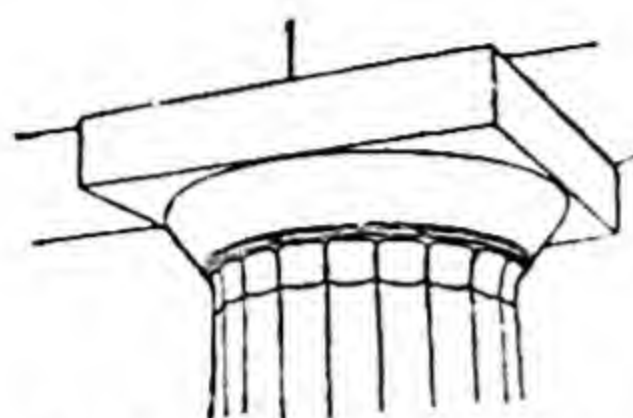
There were three Greek styles which the Renaissance builders copied—the Doric, with a massive fluted column, no base, and plain capital; the Ionic, with a more slender column, on a base, and a capital ornamented with volutes (spiral scrolls); and the Corinthian, with a fluted slender column, on a base, and a capital richly ornamented with acanthus leaves.

It is interesting to notice how careful were the

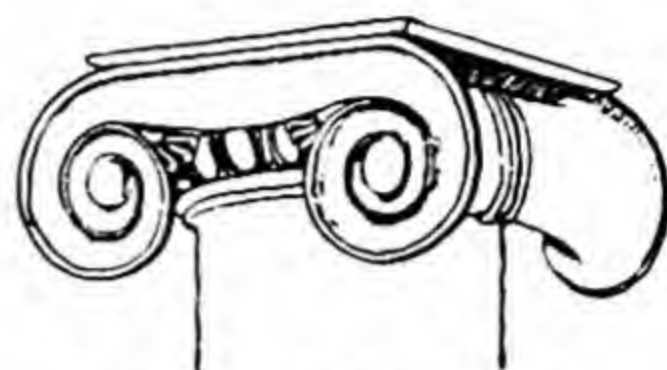
\* *Re-nais-sance*, i.e., the re-birth of ancient art and culture. (See the next book of this Series.)

† See Chapter 13.

ancient builders, and their later imitators, to maintain the proportion of the different parts. They knew that to lose the right proportions would be to lose the beauty of the whole. Thus, for example, the diameter of a



Doric capital and plain entablature.



Ionic capital and plain entablature.



Corinthian capital and ornamented entablature.

Greek Doric column is always about two-elevenths of the height, whether that be ten feet or forty ; and the mouldings are always in strict proportion.

Let us see how this "Classical" influence showed itself in three kinds of buildings : churches, town buildings, and country houses.



## § 2

The greatest days of church building were over with the Middle Ages. Most towns and villages were already provided with churches, which, if not big

enough for the growing numbers of the people, could be enlarged. When men did build new churches, they rather tended to keep to the Gothic form, which was becoming unfashionable elsewhere. But, of course, there were exceptions.

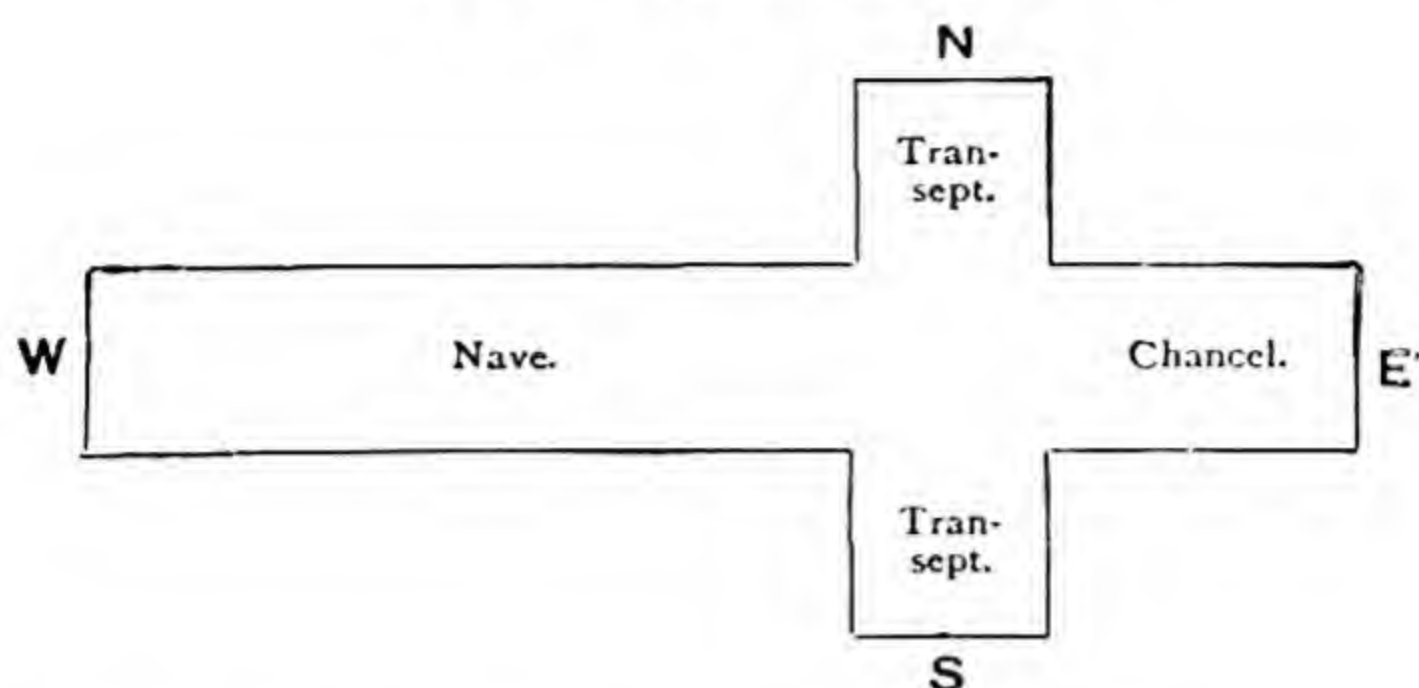
Two examples will be sufficient: St. John's, Briggate, Leeds, built by a wealthy citizen of Leeds about 1625 (in Charles I.'s reign);\* St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London, built in 1720 (George I.'s reign).



St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

Sometimes churches were altered rather cleverly to fit growing congregations, and one can often trace the alterations. The usual form of a church was a cross, as shown in the ground-plan on next page:

\* Notice how these very names, as so often, suggest history: "Briggate" or Bridge-gate, from the days when Leeds was a walled city; and St. Martin's was once really in the fields outside London proper.



Very often a church was enlarged by adding aisles—perhaps first on one side, then on the other to the nave. Then, to preserve the form of a cross, the transepts might be extended. The chancel entrance would then look too narrow, and the chancel would be widened, and arches pierced on either side of the chancel screen. To keep the proportions right, the roof would now need to be raised, and a new clere-story (that is, a “clear” story with windows all round to lighten the church) might be added to the old one. In the lengthened transepts one may often find a private chapel, belonging to some squire’s family who attended the church; and their quaint old monuments will still be preserved there. Rottingdean church near Brighton, in Sussex, shows very clearly the different stages by which it was enlarged.

### § 3

But perhaps the most interesting thing to discover about an old church is whether the stormy days of the Tudors and Stuarts—the sixteenth and seventeenth



centuries—have left their mark upon it. This was the age of the Reformation or the great change in religion.

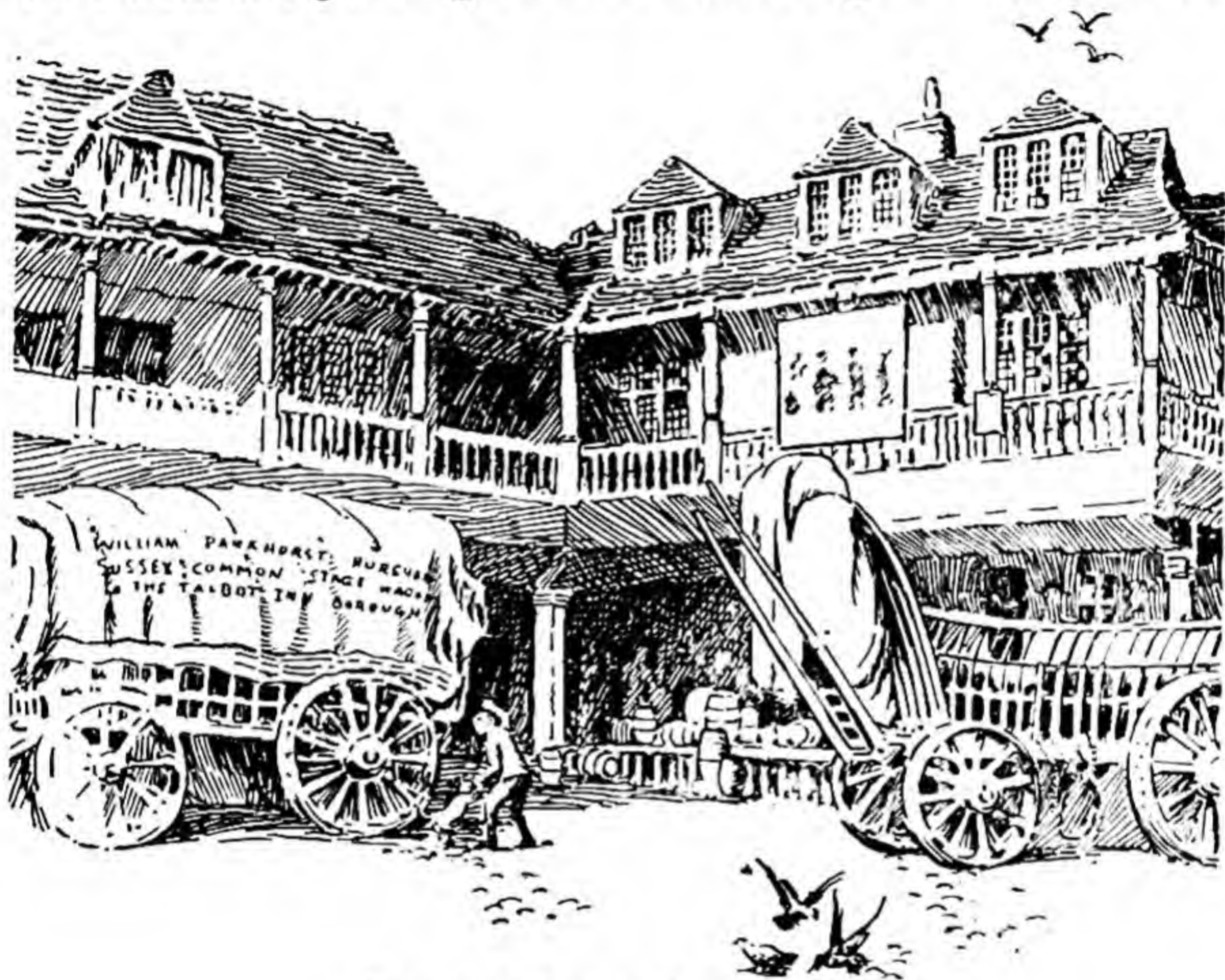
These were very difficult times for men who were in earnest about their religion. Long and bitter wars took place in many parts of Europe. Many men were persecuted and put to death for holding to what they believed to be true. Broadly, when the long struggle ended, the southern countries of Europe continued to acknowledge the Pope as head of the Church. But most of the northern countries of Europe followed some form of Protestant or Reformed religion.

Now these struggles are reflected even in churches and church furniture. The Protestants and Puritans were always trying to make the church service more simple, bare, and, as they thought, more "pure," and to get rid of anything which reminded them of the old Catholic Church. They whitewashed the walls to cover up the painted figures of saints and angels, they took away images of Christ and of the saints in wood or stone wherever they found them. Sometimes, unfortunately, they smashed the beautiful stained glass windows in which the saints were depicted.

They tried to bring the altar from the east end of the church into the chancel, so that men might sit all round it—as at a table—at holy communion. They disliked the chancel screen, which seemed to put a barrier between the people on one side and priest and altar on the other; and many chancel screens were taken out of churches. Often they carried their changes very far, and Archbishop Laud in Charles I.'s reign (about 1635) ordered that all altars should be

fenced off by altar-rails, so that at least stray dogs might be kept away !

As to monastery buildings, their great days were over with the passing of the Middle Ages. The second



Chaucer's Inn at Southwark.

(See Chapter 38, page 185.)

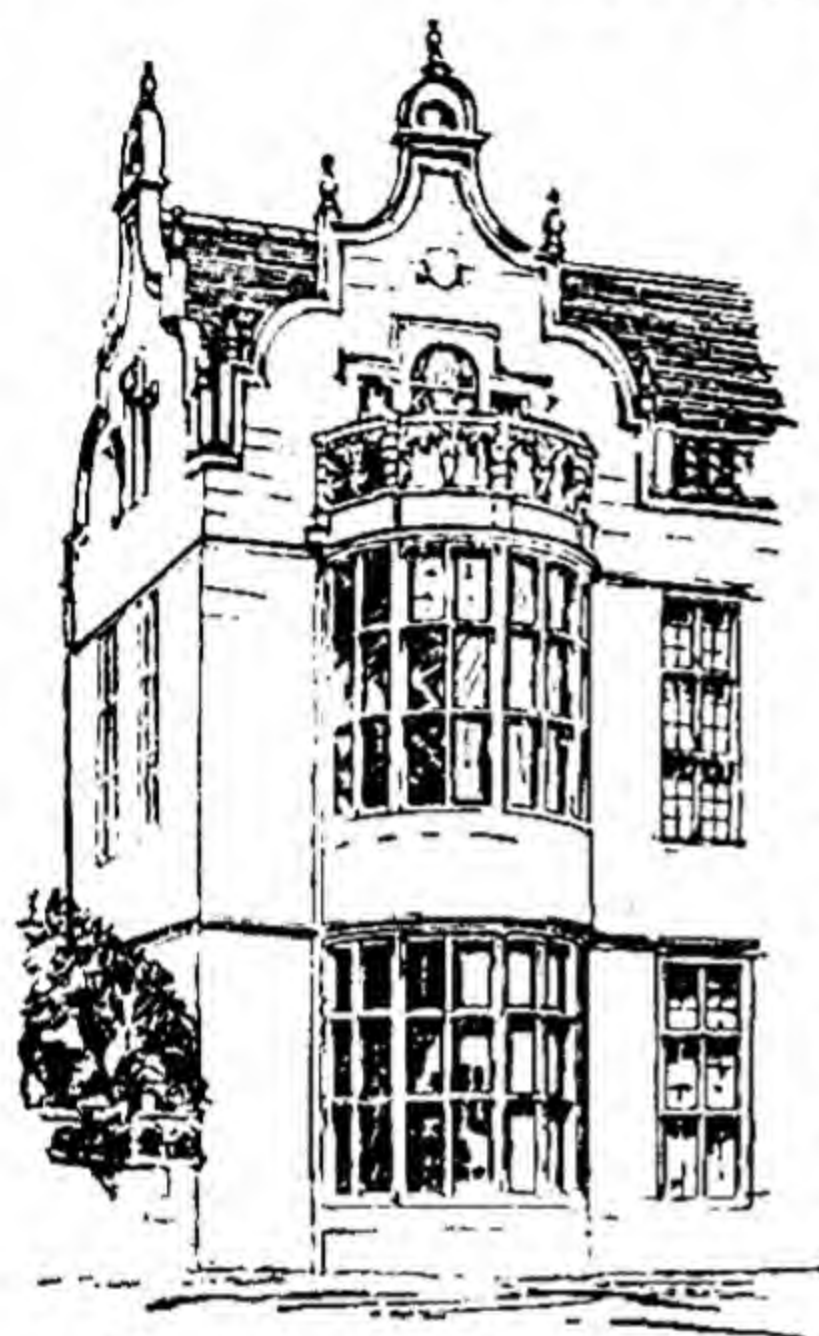
Tudor king, Henry VIII., suppressed the monasteries in England and the chantry chapels where Masses were said for the repose of the souls of the dead. Many monastic houses became private dwellings, though they are often still called by the old name, *e.g.* Vale Royal Abbey, near Northwich, in Cheshire.

It is interesting to notice that many inns were built

(3,410)



and old ones enlarged in the sixteenth century—after the monasteries had been destroyed. The monks had been good hosts, both to the rich traveller and the poor, and they were sadly missed.



Portion of Lilford Hall,  
Northants, with bay windows.

These inns, also, were built round a courtyard, where the carts could be stored and horses stabled while the owners slept in the inn. Often there was a gallery on each floor, running round the inner sides of the square, and from this visitors could look into the courtyard and watch, perhaps, a wandering showman who had come in there with his dancing bear, or his puppets, to give a performance. Sometimes

actors or mummers (see page 250) performed a play; and so we get an early form of theatre.

#### § 4

We see more of the new Renaissance architecture in kings' palaces or in the houses of noblemen or wealthy merchants. The chief change—already noticed in the fifteenth century—was that a house now was a home and not a fortress. It contained many more rooms than the Norman baron's castle. But the habit of building it round one or more courtyards still went on.

Beautiful, projecting oriel windows were a great feature now. Chimneys, which had become more common in Tudor times, were tall and fanciful, and doors and porches much ornamented. The interest in gardens seems to have increased very much about this time, so space had to be left for them.

In the eighteenth century the courtyard became less common. The nobleman's country house was now a solid and imposing building. Chatsworth, the home of the Dukes of Devonshire, is a fine example. Another great house of this kind is Blenheim, near Oxford, built for the first Duke of Marlborough. Of the architect (Vanbrugh) who planned it some one wrote when he died :

“ Lie heavy on him, earth, for he  
Laid many a grievous weight on thee ! ”

In the towns in the early eighteenth century, merchants still made most of the things they sold. They still lived and worked with their apprentices above their own shops. These shops were often nothing better than open stalls : the real house, so to speak, began upstairs, and often projected over the shop, forming a shelter for passers-by. The best example of these is in the “ Rows ” of Chester.

A town hall often started by being merely a toll booth, that is, an open shed with stout wooden pillars supporting the roof, in which the tolls, or market taxes, were collected. But soon the need was felt for a central room where members of the Merchant Guild could meet, and what more convenient than to build a room on top of this roof ! This was how many a town hall or guildhall began.



## § 5

In the nineteenth century men seemed to grow tired, at last, of the Classical styles, and there was a revival of Gothic building. Some of these buildings look rather out of place in our modern smoky towns. Whether in the twentieth century men will go on reviving and experimenting with old forms, or whether the period will produce a new style of its own, time alone can tell.

Throughout the land of Britain, in almost every village and old town, may be seen buildings of all the ages from the Norman Conquest onwards.

Most old churches are histories in themselves, and bear witness to the ages in which they were built or enlarged. The guildhall of many a town dates from the great days of the guilds or associations of workers in the Middle Ages. Even some of the great castles, though changing as man's ideas and customs were changed, are still noblemen's houses as they were in the later Middle Ages—notably the splendid Warwick Castle in the heart of England. Again, the house where Shakespeare was born (1564), the school where he was educated, the church where he worshipped, are still preserved in Stratford-on-Avon.

Finally, in almost all the great cities of England and Western Europe, we may see town halls or other public buildings built in recent times in the style of the old Greek architects, with many of the features though not with all the beauty of old Greek temples. Thus is *History written and preserved in stone.*

## EXERCISES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

1. (i) What good things does Europe owe to (a) the Greeks, and (b) the Romans?  
(ii) Trace a map of Europe, etc., to show the extent of the Roman Empire. Shade the portion under Roman rule.  
(iii) Why did the Romans conquer Britain, and why did they leave it?  
(iv) Read "The Centurion of the XXX Legion" and "On the Great Wall" in Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*.  
(v) Visit any Roman ruins near your school, or any museum in which are collected some Roman "finds." Learn all you can about the Romans from what you see, and make sketches. Purchase picture post cards if you can.
2. (i) Describe a Viking raid on an Anglo-Saxon village.  
(ii) Read "The Winged Hats" in Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*.  
(iii) Read "The Battle of Brunanburh," a poem from the Old English Chronicle for the year 937 (in *Carmina Britanniae*, edited by C. L. Thomson. This should be read aloud.  
(iv) *Local study*.—Is the name of your village or town Saxon or Danish? Make out a list of the villages round you and arrange them in two columns according to their origin. Enlarge your list by studying your county map. If you live in London try to connect your own district with Saxon and Danish times.
3. (i) When Edward the Confessor died what rights had (a) Harold, and (b) William of Normandy, to succeed as king of England?  
(ii) Describe the Battle of Hastings, or the Bayeux Tapestry.



- (iii) What was Yorkshire like at the end of the reign of William I.?
  - (iv) Read "The Onset of Taillefer" in *Carmina Britannica*.
  - (v) Dramatize the Battle of Hastings. (See suggestions at end of this book.)
4. (i) How did William I. prevent his barons from becoming too strong?
- (ii) Why did the Saxons dislike the Normans? Do you think it was a good thing for England to be conquered by the Normans, or not? Give your reasons.
- (iii) Say all you can about the *Doomsday Book*.
- (iv) Tell what happened at Salisbury in 1086.
- (v) Read *William the Conqueror*, by D. M. Stenton. There will be a copy in the public library.
5. (i) Describe the life of a villein in Norman times. Was he better or worse off than a farm labourer of to-day?
- (ii) What is a "common"? Have you one near your home? Describe the arrangement of the village to which this term carries your mind back.
- (iii) Read "The Norman Baron," by Longfellow.
- (iv) Read "The Young Men at the Manor" and "The Old Men at Pevensey" in Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*.
6. (i) Give a list of the Norman kings of England, with their dates. Which of them would you consider good kings, and which bad kings? Give your reason (orally) in each case.
- (ii) Draw a Norman ship and date it. (Keep this for comparison with the ships of later periods which you will be advised to sketch.)
- (iii) Read "The Tree of Justice" in Kipling's *Rewards and Fairies*.
7. (i) Tell the story of Canossa. What does it show?
- (ii) What did men mean by "the two swords" and "the sun and the moon"? Show the difference between the two ideas.
8. (i) Describe a day in the life of a monk.
- (ii) Visit the ruins of any monastery in your district or the abbey church nearest your school; then describe what you have seen.
9. (i) Trace a map of the British Isles and France; and by

different shadings show the lands which Henry II. ruled (a) directly as king, (b) as a vassal of the French king, and (c) as overlord.

- (ii) What do you understand by a "clerk," Church Courts, Assize of Arms?
- (iii) Why does Henry II. deserve to be called a "great" king?
10. (i) Contrast Becket's life before and after he was made archbishop.
- (ii) What were the results of the murder of Becket?
- (iii) Dramatize the death of Becket.
11. (i) Give an account of the Irish in Norman times.
- (ii) Show that the conquest of Ireland in Henry II.'s reign was incomplete. What bad effects did this produce?

## Revision

- (i) Explain these terms: "Dark Ages," overlord, vassal, fyrd, manor, scutage, assizes.
- (ii) Write brief notes on the following: Lanfranc, Anselm, Rolf the Ganger, Strongbow.
- (iii) Say what you understand by the Camp of Refuge, Palatine earldoms, Investiture, the Pale.
- (iv) Read Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake*, or Herbert Strang's *In the New Forest*.
12. (i) Tell all you know about Peter the Hermit and Godfrey de Bouillon.
- (ii) Tell the story of the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders.
- (iii) Why were the Knights Templars and the Knights of St. John so called? What work did they do?
- (iv) Trace a map of Europe and the Mediterranean coasts. Insert names mentioned in this chapter. (Keep this map for future use.)
13. (i) How did Richard I. raise money to go on a Crusade?
- (ii) Why do you think Richard failed to take Jerusalem?
- (iii) On your map of Europe insert Richard's route to Jerusalem and back home again.
14. (i) Describe the chief results of the Crusades on life in Europe.



- (ii) How were the Jews treated by the Christians in the Middle Ages?
- (iii) Is there a "Crusader" in your church or in some other church known to you? Describe him from your own observation. Then find out all you can about him from people likely to know, and from your local and county histories.
- (iv) Read *Boy Crusaders*, by J. G. Edgar; *Brothers in Arms*, by F. B. Harrison.
- 15. (i) Explain shortly the different reasons why the barons hated John and made war on him.
- (ii) Why did John quarrel with Pope Innocent III.?
- (iii) What means did the Pope take to force John to submit to him? How did John meet each of these?
- (iv) What do you think was the most important consequence to England of the loss of Normandy?
- (v) Act, or read Shakespeare's play of *King John*, Act iv., Scene i.
- 16. (i) Give as nearly as you can the words of any one clause in Magna Carta, and show its importance in the history of the English people.
- (ii) Read *Runnymede and Lincoln Fair*, by J. G. Edgar.
- (iii) Dramatize the scene at Runnymede.
- 17. (i) Compare Henry III. and John as kings; and Hubert de Burgh and Archbishop Boniface as ministers.
- (ii) Tell the story of the Mad Parliament.
- 18. (i) Who may be called "The Father of the English Parliament"? Why?
- (ii) Read aloud "A Ballad on the Death of Simon de Montfort, in *Carmina Britanniae*."
- (iii) Give your opinion of Simon de Montfort as a *man*.
- (iv) Read *A Clerk of Oxford*, by E. Everett-Green.
- 19. (i) Describe the ceremony of "dubbing" a knight.
- (ii) What were the duties of (a) a page, (b) a squire, (c) a knight?
- (iii) Why may St. Louis be called "a very perfect, gentle knight"?
- 20. (i) Why did St. Francis leave his home?
- (ii) Why do you think so many people loved St. Francis and followed him?

- 21.** (i) What did the Grey Friars do for the poor ?  
 (ii) Show how the life and work of St. Dominic was in some ways like, in other ways different from, that of St. Francis.  
 (iii) Is there, or had there been, a "friary" in your town ? Would you expect to find a monastery in your town ? What do you learn from this ? Find out all you can about such street names as Friar Lane, Blackfriars Gate, Pilgrim Street, Abbey Street, Nun Street, and why they were so called.

## Revision

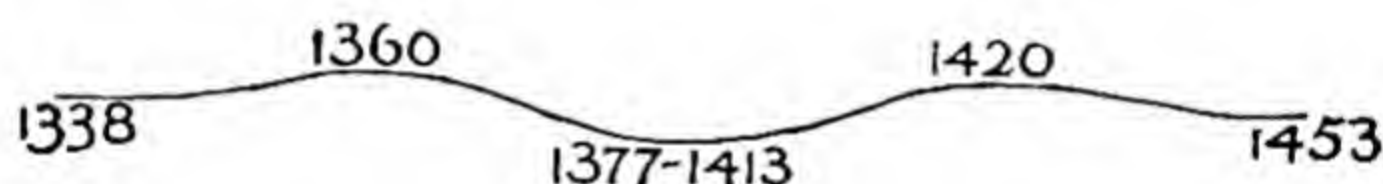
- (i) Give the dates for the beginning and the ending of each of the following periods in English history : Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Danish, Norman.  
 (ii) What incidents are connected with the following dates : 937, 1066, 1087, 1095, 1138, 1215, 1265 ?  
 (iii) Write short notes on Brunanburh, Hereward, Stephen Langton, Dante.
- 22.** (i) Why did Edward I. call Parliament together in 1295 ? Whom did he summon to it ? Show that this Parliament was more truly representative of the English nation than the Parliament of 1265.  
 (ii) Describe how Parliament soon showed its power.  
 (iii) Find out if possible how your village or town was represented in the Parliament of 1295.
- 23.** (i) Tell the story of the English conquest of Wales.  
 (ii) Was Edward I. right or wrong in conquering Wales ? Give your reason.  
 (iii) How is Edward said to have tried to secure the good opinion of the Welsh ?  
 (iv) Read Gray's poem, "The Bard."
- 24.** (i) What were Edward I.'s first plans for uniting England and Scotland ? Why did they fail ?  
 (ii) Explain John Balliol's difficulties as king of Scotland.  
 (iii) Contrast the results of Edward's wars in Scotland and Wales respectively.



- (iv) Sing "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled."
- (v) Read "The Battle of Bannockburn," from Scott's *The Lord of the Isles*, Canto VI., xix.-xxxv.
- 25. (i) What influence has the physical character of Switzerland had upon the character and history of the Swiss?
- (ii) With what other countries can you compare Switzerland in this respect?
- (iii) Dramatize the story of William Tell.
- 26. (i) Give some account of schools and universities in the Middle Ages. Explain why "grammar" schools were so called.
- (ii) Tell the story of Roger Bacon. Why is he called the "wonderful doctor"?
- 27. (i) How did the cities of Italy grow strong, rich, and free?
- (ii) Tell the story of the Battle of Legnano.
- (iii) On your map of Europe insert Rome, Florence, Milan, Venice, Genoa, Legnano, Assisi, the plain of Lombardy with its rivers, the Alps, Germany.
- 28. (i) What does Dante describe in *The Divine Comedy*?
- (ii) What do you know of (a) Giotto, and (b) Fra Angelico?
- 29. (i) Describe Venice at the height of its power in the Middle Ages.
- (ii) Give your reasons for the foremost place taken by Venice among trading towns in the Middle Ages.
- (iii) On your map of Europe insert the route of the Venetian galleys of the fourteenth century to London and Southampton; to Constantinople; to Alexandria; to Crete, Cyprus, and Jaffa.
- 30. (i) Describe the appearance and character of the Tartars.
- (ii) Tell about China, and say what industries the Chinese were famed for from very early times.
- (iii) Tell what you know of Marco Polo, his travels, and his book.
- (iv) Describe the home-coming of the three Polos.
- 31. (i) Who were the Hanse Merchants? Where did they trade? Describe their life in London.
- (ii) On your map of Europe insert the towns of the Hanseatic League and underline them. Indicate the routes be-

tween these towns, and from them to the Baltic, to London, to Bergen, and to Iceland.

- (iii) Draw on your "ship chart" a ship of the Hanseatic League (note its tiny size), and also a Venetian galley. Compare the two. (Look up your illustrated histories, etc.)
  - (iv) Find from your dictionary, or otherwise, what *history* lies behind the terms "Bank," "Lombard Street," "Sterling value." (Your dictionary should give the derivation of the word.)
32. (i) In what ways was the reign of Edward II. a bad time for England?
- (ii) Read Everett-Green's *My Lady Joanna*, Henty's *In Freedom's Cause*, Jane Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*.
33. (i) Mention three causes of the Hundred Years' War.
- (ii) Explain this "wave":



34. (i) Name the Cinque Ports, and show what part they played in English history in the Middle Ages.
- (ii) Describe the Battle of Sluys.
- (iii) On your map of England mark the Cinque Ports. Can you give any reason for these ports being where they are?
- (iv) Draw on your ship chart a ship of the time of the Battle of Sluys.
35. (i) On your map of Europe mark Flanders, Guienne, Burgundy, Normandy, Gascony, Paris, Calais, Crecy, Bordeaux.
- (ii) Trace a map of France and mark on it the route of Edward III. Draw a plan of the Battle of Crecy. Make a model of the Battle of Crecy, or of the siege of Calais.
- (iii) Describe how the English won the Battle of Crecy.
- (iv) Dramatize the story of the Burghers of Calais.
36. (i) Why do you think the English fortunes in France declined, on the whole, after 1360?



- (ii) Read J. G. Edgar's *Crecy and Poitiers*, Conan Doyle's *The White Company*, Charlotte Yonge's *The Lances of Lynwood*.

### Revision

- (i) Write short notes on the Witan, the Great Council, Henry I.'s Charter, Magna Carta, Simon de Montfort.
- (ii) How did the wars undertaken by the English kings increase the power of Parliament?
37. (i) What difficulties arose in England as a result of the Black Death? How did Parliament try to meet these?
- (ii) What were the effects of the Black Death in your neighbourhood? (Look up your local and county histories. Any effect upon your local church building?)
38. (i) Describe, as vividly as you can, any one of Chaucer's Pilgrims.
- (ii) What is the story of *The Canterbury Tales*?
- (iii) Learn by heart one or two of Chaucer's descriptions of the people of his time.
- (iv) Read for yourself *The Canterbury Tales* (in modern English), Everett-Green's *In the Days of Chivalry*, F. M. Peard's *'Prentice Hugh*.
39. (i) Who were Wycliffe's "poor preachers," and what work did they do?
- (ii) Compare Chaucer and Wycliffe with regard to the lives they led, and say why we remember them.
40. (i) Mention as many causes as you can of the Peasants' Revolt.
- (ii) How did Richard II. deal with the revolt?
- (iii) What were its results on (a) the villeins, (b) the landlords?
- (iv) Dramatize an incident in the Peasants' Revolt—make dresses and clothes of the period; speeches to show living conditions.
- (v) Read *Selections from Froissart*, by N. L. Frazer.
41. (i) What kind of a man was Richard II.? Show why he was deposed.
- (ii) Compare Edward II. and Richard II.

42. How did the Hundred Years' War affect the French peasants?
43. (i) Show how, under Henry V., the English victories in France reached their greatest height.  
(ii) What was the position of affairs in France when Henry V. died?  
(iii) On your map of France mark Agincourt and the route of Henry V.  
(iv) Learn by heart Henry V.'s speech (Shakespeare) on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt.  
(v) Imagine yourself a soldier at Agincourt and write a letter home to England telling about the two camps, and the king's noble speech.
44. (i) Tell the story of Joan of Arc's early life.  
(ii) Account for Joan's first victories against the English.  
(iii) How did she die?  
(iv) Enter on your map of France: Lorraine, Orleans, Rheims, Rouen.  
(v) Dramatize an incident from Joan's life.
45. (i) Write short notes on (a) retainers, (b) the Earl of Warwick, (c) Henry Tudor.  
(ii) What is meant by *civil* war? How does this differ from rebellion? Give two examples of each in England.  
(iii) Read Stevenson's *The Black Arrow*.  
(iv) Dramatize Bosworth Field.
46. Show from the Paston Letters how ordinary people suffered during the Wars of the Roses.
47. Mention as many changes as you can in English life between 1400 and 1485.

## Revision

- (i) Say what you can about Knights Templars, Tournaments, Universities, Lollards.
- (ii) Write down, as quickly as you can, the dates and corresponding incidents you can remember, and see how many you can write in a time limit of five minutes. Then do this *orally*, with a time limit of *one* minute.
- (iii) Mention as many men as you can in this period who, in your opinion, deserve the title of *patriot*, and say briefly



why you mention each. Can a *woman* be a patriot? Name one.

- (iv) Describe briefly the changes in a soldier's weapons from 1066 to 1485. Can you say anything about the changes in his personal means of defence to meet these changes? (Examine any effigies in churches, illustrations, etc.)
48. (i) Tell what you have already learned about the Turks before 1450.  
 (ii) How did the Fall of Constantinople affect Europe?
49. (i) Who were the Merchant Adventurers? With what other merchants can you compare them?  
 (ii) Tell the story of Caxton.
50. (i) Give an account of Prince Henry the Navigator, and show the importance of the work he did.  
 (ii) On your map of the world mark the places and routes mentioned in this chapter. Write the navigator's name, with his date, on the route line.  
 (iii) Read *Our Sea Power*, by H. W. Household.
51. (i) Visit your own church (or, if it is a modern one, the nearest old church to your home :  
 (a) How many of the architectural features described in this chapter can you find in it by yourself?  
 (b) Say from your own observations when your church was built, and give your reasons.  
 (c) Perhaps its architecture is not uniform. Can you give approximate time, or times, when it was altered? Is there anything in the story of your village or neighbourhood to account for the alterations?  
 (d) Check your conclusions by referring again to this chapter and by reference to your teacher.  
 (ii) Sketch any doorway, arch, window, pillar, font, or carving that is old and interesting. First of all, say all you can about it from your own observation, and then find out something more about it from illustrations of similar work.  
 (iii) Visit your nearest cathedral, abbey, or large town church.
52. (i) Describe any very old building in your neighbourhood which was occupied before 1485 (castle, peel tower,

fortified manor-house, etc.—it may be in ruins now). Your local and county histories will help you.

- (ii) Visit your nearest town. Look for picture post cards of old historical buildings in the town. Collect these, and visit the buildings. Photograph for yourself the portions which strike you as interesting.

### Revision

53. (i) Give dates (or approximate dates) for Roger Bacon, Wycliffe, Chaucer, Caxton, Lewellyn, Wallace, Joan of Arc, First Crusade, the Model Parliament, the Peasants' Revolt.
- (ii) Write down *one* fact connected with each of the following:
- (a) Salisbury, Canossa, Canterbury, Assisi, Florence, Stirling, Lübeck, Crecy, Agincourt, Bosworth.
  - (b) Gregory the Great, Rolf the Ganger, William Tell, Marco Polo, Dante, Giotto.
  - (c) Hereward, Strongbow, Stephen Langton, Henry Bolingbroke, John Ball, Margaret Paston.

## NOTES ON DRAMATIZATION

1. Read up the event from the larger histories, biographies, books of stories, historical novels, etc., in your class or school library, and get as much information as you possibly can about it. Poems written on it will give you suggestions for speeches. You can also get useful hints from Nelson's *Plays from History* and similar books, but it is perhaps better to make up your own speeches and acts if possible. Work in groups, each group under a leader.

2. While those who have speaking parts are writing down and memorizing their words, other groups should be getting on with making costumes, weapons, armour, etc. Before actually making them, study as many illustrations as you can in illustrated history books, such as Quennell's *Everyday Life in England* (there is a series of these very useful volumes); books on costume, collections of illustrations, like *Historical Illustrations*, by Barfield, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, etc., etc.



3. Make all your "properties" out of simple material—peasants' garments can be made out of sackings (washed); trunk hose out of mother's old stockings; an old bath-sheet, dyed (the Domestic Centre will, perhaps, co-operate here), and edged with cotton wool makes your royal or judicial robe; a broom handle topped with a brass knob provides a sceptre; dish-cloths of open mesh, stitched together, shaped, and coated with aluminium paint, make realistic chain mail; tea-paper mounted on stout brown paper or cardboard, will do for your plate armour. Any more suggestions will spoil the game for you. All you really need is a supply of cardboard, paper of various colours, wood, paint, knives, scissors, paste, etc.; some ingenuity and nimble fingers "to cut and contrive," and merry hearts to make mistakes and try again.

It is very likely that you cannot prepare all this in school time. The "play" will be all the better if it is largely the result of your group efforts during your leisure time.

4. Those of you who have speaking parts in one play should take a non-speaking part in the next, and vice versa. And those who have no part should form as big a "crowd of citizens," "army," "crew," as can possibly be allowed in the space available. If this is out of the question you should, while sitting in your desks, act as a "chorus" by narrating the circumstances which led up to the incident (the "prologue"), what happened between the scenes (if there are two of them), and what happened as the result of the incident (the "epilogue," giving dates, etc.).

5. Suggest incidents other than those mentioned in the questions for dramatization if they appeal to you strongly.

6. In all this, the more you can do as the result of your own knowledge, research, and inventiveness, the better. Go to your teacher for advice only when you are really beaten by your difficulties.

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